

Leading the Way to a Senior Friendly Canada

Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance
2014 Pre-budget Consultations

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On Behalf of Canadian Home Instead Senior Care Franchise Owners



Executive Summary

Seniors comprise the fastest-growing age group in Canada- a trend that is expected to continue for the next several decades. By 2021 18.5% of the population is projected to be 65 years and older- up from 14.4% in 2011.i In 2031 seniors will represent 22.8% of the population.ii This trend is not a crisis but an important change in demographics creating major social shifts around which government leadership is required.

Today's seniors are healthier and wealthier than ever beforeiii- a testament to our success as society. Notwithstanding the favourable circumstances in which seniors find themselves, many would prefer to remain in the workplace. Approximately 50% do so because they enjoy the work and see themselves as staying active in the workplace and making vital contributions. However, the other half are working to increase savings, afford the expense of caring for a family member, or, to help their children meet their expenses.iv

Reliance on family and friends is normal and something that most see as their duty. Indeed many embrace the opportunity to give back and to help someone in need. However, the reality is that the balance is tipping with the aging population resulting in more people needing a little help than those with capacity to help.

As illness occurs, regardless of age, Canadians want to be at home where they are comfortable, close to loved ones and all that is familiar. Home is where the memories are. Remaining at home is largely possible through the care and attention of family and community. The "non-medical" support, such as personal care, meal preparation, household maintenance, companionship, and assistance with errands and appointments is predominantly what's required to keep people from prematurely entering an institutional setting. It is this type of care and support that is affordable for families and which should be normalized as part of the life course for Canadians.

Home Instead Senior Care (HISC) is the world's trusted provider of non-medical, in-home care services for seniors. The company's mission is to enable seniors to live happy, healthy, and independent lives in the comfort of their homes. Worldwide, HISC franchise offices employ more than 65,000 CAREGivers who provide basic support services which enable seniors to live safely and comfortably in their own homes for as long as possible.

In this submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance pre-budget consultations, HISC focuses on seniors and suggests three areas where the federal government can show leadership.

- 1. National Seniors Strategy-** a comprehensive framework to address the dimensions of senior care with special attention paid to Alzheimer's and other dementias.
- 2. Tax Policy Changes-** create a national study commission to review the impact of the current tax code on senior-care decision-making and recommend adjustments to the code, which would encourage home care and personal responsibility for senior care.
- 3. An Educational Campaign-** initiatives to educate Canadians about aging and care and support options that are safe and effective; private and public.

Ministry Priority: Supporting families and helping vulnerable Canadians by focusing on health, education and training.

Seniors in the Workforce

The aging population is the impetus for every Canadian to redefine how we think about the senior years. Seniors who want to continue working often face a number of negative incentives, ranging from full-time requirements, hours of work, physical demand, and caps on extended benefits and pension plans. While mandatory retirement has largely been eliminated and only 27% of Canadians expect to be fully retired at 66^v, there is much that can be done to accommodate older Canadians in the workplace. A National Seniors Strategy should address workplace practices that are "friendly" to older employees. These practices would include flex hours, senior specific education and training programs to help seniors adopt new technical and/or mentoring skills, and alternate forms of payment such as "senior care credits".

Senior Care Credits could be for privately retained non-medical care at home. Non-medical care includes activities of daily living such as basic personal care, meal preparation, household maintenance, companionship, and assistance with errands and appointments. It is the type of activity, which is not typically considered health care but which research has shown to be an essential element to keeping people from prematurely entering an institutional setting. These services may be provided through provincial programs when a person has a health issue. However, these same services are most often provided by friends and family and can be purchased by families who are unavailable or unable to meet the demands.

Senior friendly employment practices should be encouraged through federal policy and by the government itself, as one of Canada's largest employers. HISC recommends that the government:

- Develop employment equivalency opportunities, such as senior care credits, for seniors who are willing and able to continue as members of the workforce.
- Develop a senior caregiving transition fund expressly for testing employer initiatives to better accommodate Canadians caring for older family members.

Caregiving

Caregiving has become "an unexpected second career" for many people approaching retirement. One in five Canadians aged 45 and older provides some form of care to seniors living with long-term health problems.^{vi} A quarter of all family caregivers are seniors themselves; a third of them (more than 200,000) are older than 75.^{vii} Caregivers perform a range of tasks in caring for their family member or friend, with providing transportation being the most commonly reported (73%). Other tasks included housework (51%), house maintenance and outdoor work (45%), scheduling and coordinating appointments (31%), managing finances (27%), helping with medical treatments (23%) and providing personal care (22%).^{viii} Without this type of support, many have no choice but to select an institutional solution.

It is the overwhelming preference of older adults around the world to remain at home as they age, and families will typically do their best to make that happen.

According to research by Jacques Legare, the availability of family to provide care will change significantly by 2030. Legare cites divorce, common-law unions, blended families and relatively few children per couple as considerations when planning for the future,^{ix}

As a second career, those who undertake regular caregiving should be recognized for their work. The government should use its tax levers to make it easier for families to continue to provide care at home- either directly or with the support of private service provider organizations - of family members as they age and become infirmed. Purchasing care from reliable service provider organizations ensures quality and mitigates risk that can occur when people opt to hire an individual without credentials, supervision and support. Caregiving tax credits should be increased and refundable. Tax policy should clearly exempt professional and non-medical home care services from GST removing the barrier to respite programs that provide families with necessary breaks from their caregiving responsibilities.

HISC recommends that the government create a national study commission to review the impact of the current tax code on senior-care decision-making and recommend **tax policy changes/** adjustments, designed to encourage home care and personal responsibility for senior care. Specific measures to address include:

- Building on the current caregiver tax credit by making it refundable and increasing the amount of deduction scaled to the intensity of caregiving required.
- Eliminating GST on all forms of home care.

The Impact of Dementia

One of the most prevalent and devastating chronic conditions that afflict seniors is dementia, of which Alzheimer's disease is undoubtedly the best known. It is anticipated that the number of Canadians living with dementia, will double the current incidence to 1.4 million by 203Lx

Health care practitioners will need to increase their knowledge and skill in order to meet the demands for care and greater attention will need to be applied to non-medical care provided by friends, families and paid support staff. HISC has developed an expertise in providing Alzheimer and dementia care and has found worldwide that among older adults with some form of dementia, paid in-home non-medical care appears to be the preferred means of augmenting other forms of care. Research on the impact of this care has shown that those with dementia are able to remain at home longer, able to take advantage of services such as adult day programs and require less direct physician care and fewer hospitalizations than do those without such care. The difference is not because seniors who use paid in-home non-medical care sacrifice appropriate medical care. On the contrary, they appear to receive more chronic and/or acute care from other highly trained- but less costly- clinical professionals such as home care nurses and therapists.^{xi}

Until there is a cure, we must care for the carer.

Chairman and Co-founder,
Paul Hogan

HISC recommends that the government adopt an **Educational Campaign** to inform Canadians about aging and support options that are safe and effective, private and public.

- Renew investments and the commitment in the 2014 Budget for health research to tackle the growing onset of dementia, and related illnesses.
- Provide education to help seniors quickly access information about programs and services they need and use in their communities – as caregivers and recipients.

Conclusion

The Government of Canada has the opportunity to lead the changes in social policy and practice that are required to respond to our aging society. Home Instead Senior Care has

the privilege of a global perspective through participation at the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Aging and active engagement around the world. We believe that the recommendations provided will help to prepare for a senior friendly Canada.

About Home Instead

Home Instead was founded by Paul and Lori Hogan in 1994 in Omaha, Nebraska, and began franchising in June 1995. It was Paul's own family experience caring for his grandmother for 12 years that influenced his realization of the need for non-medical home care and elder-companionship services to help seniors live independently at home.

By 1998, the Home Instead Senior Care network had grown to 99 franchise offices and was recognized by *Entrepreneur* magazine as one of the 100 fastest-growing franchise companies in the United States. In 2000, Home Instead began international expansion by establishing a partner relationship with Duskin Co. in Osaka, Japan.

The Home Instead Senior Care Foundation was created in 2003 to further the philanthropic mission of franchisees. The foundation's objective is to provide financial assistance to non-profit organizations specializing in projects that improve the quality of life for seniors.

Today, Home Instead Senior Care is a multinational provider of non-medical, in-home care services for seniors with a network of 1,000 franchises in the United States, Canada and over a dozen other countries. Worldwide, Home Instead Senior Care franchise offices employ more than 65,000 CAREGivers who provide basic support services which enable seniors to live safely and comfortably in their own homes for as long as possible.

For more information:

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End Notes

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- ii Ibid
- iii Guatieri, Sal. (2014) *The Senior Set*. Bank of Montreal News Release, <http://newsroom.bmo.com/press-releases/the-senior-set-bmo-report-suggests-today-s-older--tsx-bmo-201407110957072001>
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- vi Alzheimer Society of Canada. (2010) *Baby Boomer Survey: Alzheimer's disease ... it's more than you think*.
- vii Ibid
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- ix Unknown. (2010) *Aging baby boomers will count on extended family and nontraditional networks*. Senior Care Canada, Second Quarter 2010
- x Alzheimer Society of Canada website. Retrieved on July 25, 2014 from <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/About-dementia/Dementias/What-is-dementia/Facts-about-dementia>
- xi HISC. (2010) *Benefitting those with Alzheimer's Disease & Dementia*. Commissioned Research