

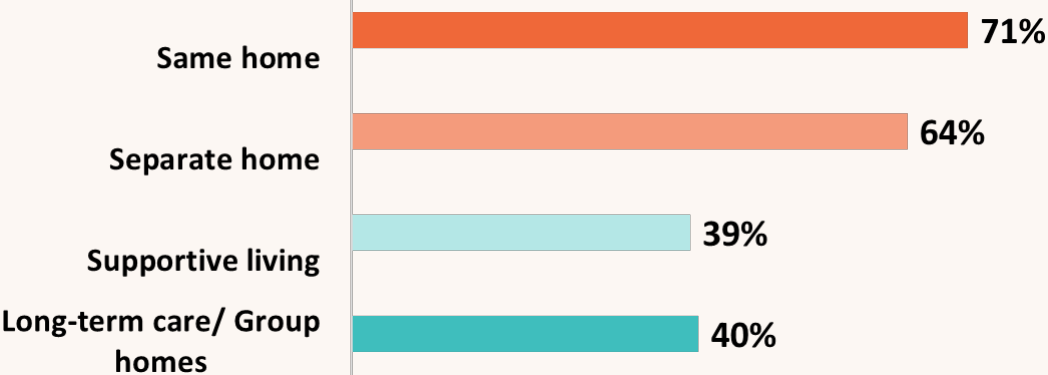
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Alberta Family Caregivers: 2021

We asked Alberta caregivers how COVID-19 had affected their caregiving and what they need after 18 months of the pandemic.

Here are some of the 556 participants responses:

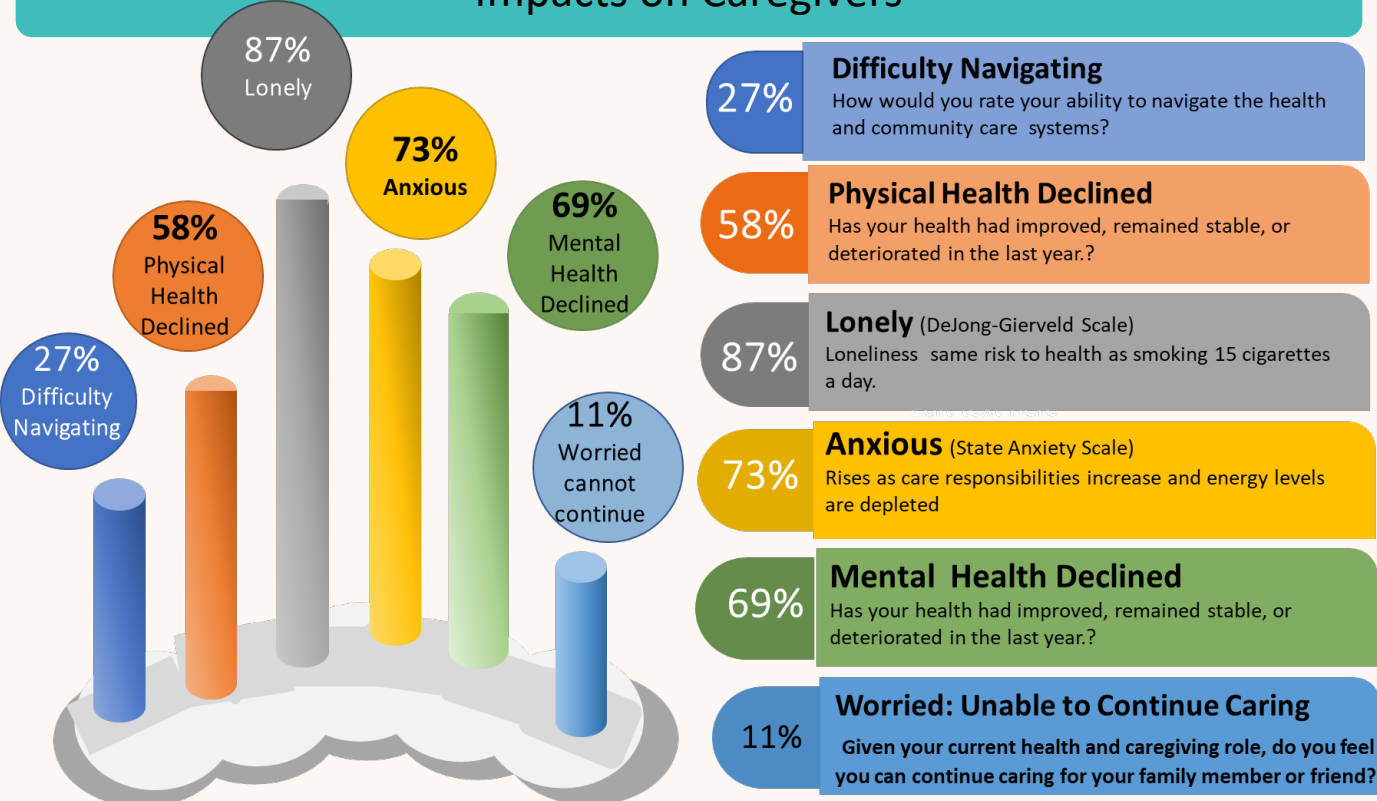
Impacts on Caregiving Work

Caregiving work has increased in the last year.



511/556 survey respondents had been caring before pandemic began

Impacts on Caregivers



Difficulty Navigating
27% How would you rate your ability to navigate the health and community care systems?

Physical Health Declined
58% Has your health had improved, remained stable, or deteriorated in the last year?

Lonely (DeJong-Gierveld Scale)
87% Loneliness same risk to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Anxious (State Anxiety Scale)
73% Rises as care responsibilities increase and energy levels are depleted

Mental Health Declined
69% Has your health had improved, remained stable, or deteriorated in the last year?

Worried: Unable to Continue Caring
11% Given your current health and caregiving role, do you feel you can continue caring for your family member or friend?

What supports will help Alberta's family caregivers sustain their caregiving and to maintain their own health?

Family caregivers want to ensure the care-receiver's overall wellbeing is supported and they are supported to maintain a balance in their life, work, and caregiving roles.

Domain 1: Attend to the care-receiver's wellbeing

Key themes in caregivers' recommendations related to attending to the care-receiver's wellbeing:

1. Respect the care-receiver as a person. They wanted the person they cared for respected, valued, and treated with dignity.
2. Ensure staffing levels meet the care-receiver's needs. They reported that COVID-19 had exacerbated an underfunded continuing care system. They wanted to ensure that they and healthcare providers had enough time for holistic person-centered care.
3. Support care-receivers emotionally. Family caregivers regarded emotional support as a significant part of their role and of holistic care. They wanted care to explicitly include time to listen, human touch (e.g., holding hands, touching an arm), or reassurance.
4. Ensure care-receivers have opportunities and support to engage in meaningful activities. Caregivers referred to activities as visits with family and friends, physical exercise like walking, or "engaging things to do" (e.g., enjoyable activities, interactions with others).

Domain 2: Supports that enable Family Caregivers to balance their work, life, and family caregiving roles

Key themes related to balancing work, life, and family caregiving roles:

1. Recognize and respect their family caregiver role. They reported that they felt "invisible" and "abandoned"; their care work was considered "failure to work"; and they were treated as an "inconvenient expense" and "expendable."
2. Communicate in timely person-centered manner tailored to the caregiver's roles as partner-in-care, care coordinator, and care advocate. Caregivers used words like truthful, open, clearer, active, and listening to describe the desired communication that would enable them to gather information, determine the best course of action, navigate systems, coordinate care, and solve problems.
3. Ask caregivers about what they need to ensure supports address the caregivers' and their care-receivers' needs. These caregivers wanted practical, person-centered support that they could use in their unique situations.
4. Relieve the financial stress of caregiving. About a third of family caregivers wanted government programs or other supports to relieve the financial stress directly related to their caregiving role.



Full Report

<https://www.caregivercare.ca/research>

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