

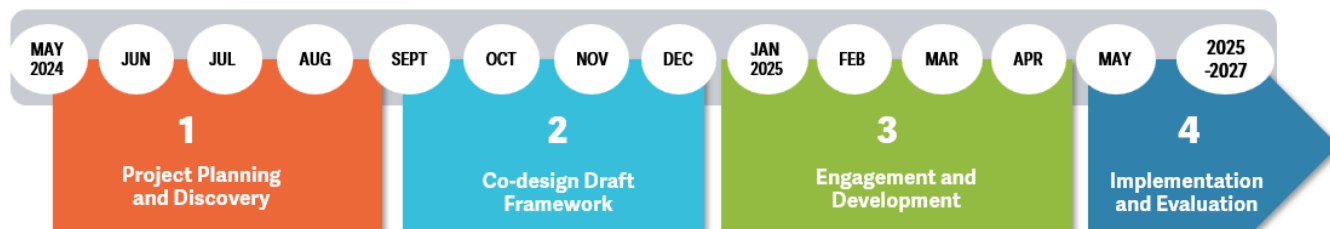
Innovating Integrated Supports for Alberta's Family Caregivers Strategy & Action Plan

Discovery Report: What We Heard & Proposed Priorities

September 2024

Introduction

Over the summer, the **Innovating Integrated Supports for Alberta's Family Caregivers** project team interviewed 44 individuals (see Appendix A) involved in the providing health and social/ community programs and services to Albertans as part of Phase 1 of the project (see below). Our goal was to gain insights into the current efforts underway to support family caregivers and the challenges and successes in this work. Participants also shared their hopes and advice for the strategy work. These conversations suggested several initial areas of priority or focus for the strategy for us to consider.



Project phases and timeline for Innovating Integrated Supports for Alberta's Family Caregivers Strategy & Action Plan.

Current Efforts to Support Family Caregivers in Alberta

Services:

- Navigation—information, knowledge, access
- Social prescribing
- Home care, Client-directed Homecare
- Intake, assessments and referrals
- Non-medical supports
- Specialized support teams

Programs:

- Support group, peer support
- One-on-one coaching
- Grief and loss support
- Early intervention programs
- Respite
- Adult day programs
- Recreational programs
- Social programs

Information:

- Hubs, centres, single points of contact
- Information channels, platforms, guides
- Mapping (services, connections)
- Database of resources

Capacity Building

- Education, training for providers
- Education for family caregivers
- Research, studies, white papers
- Advocacy, public policy and awareness
- Prevention efforts

Engagement

- Family caregiver consultation, engagement in planning
- Designated support partners; patient partners
- Community engagement
- Outreach
- Volunteerism

Development

- Community-led initiatives
- Distribution of funding and grants
- Evaluation and measurement
- Innovation models, pilots and projects
- Program development

Collaboration

- Collective planning and priority setting
- Co-ordination of efforts and resources

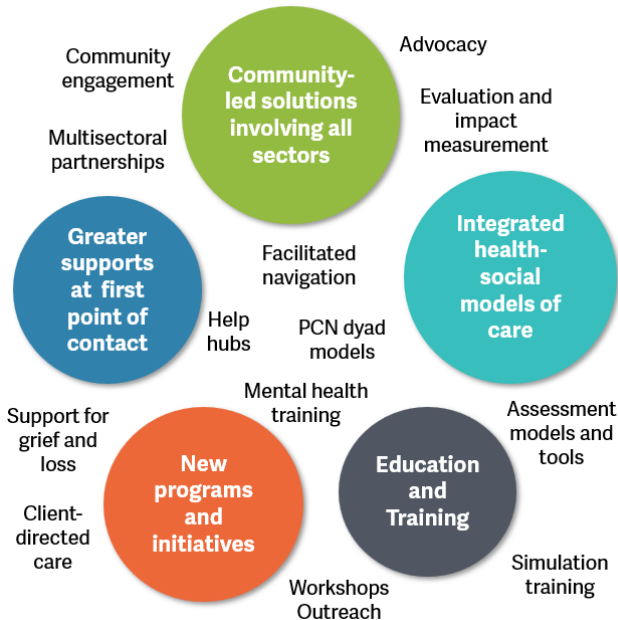
Challenges and Barriers

Participants identified the challenges and barriers impacting their ability to support family caregivers and the challenges family caregivers encounter, often drawing on their own experiences as family caregivers. Comments ranged from system challenges to the daily realities both providers and family caregivers face.



Some Successes and Progress

Those we interviewed shared some of their success stories. The interviews provided insight into some areas of investment and progress in supporting family caregivers in Alberta that the strategy might build on—including examples of better co-ordination and teamwork, education and awareness, new programs and services and creative problem-solving approaches. Here’s a look at some of the areas of focused effort, success and points of progress that were shared by the participants.



Hopes

Participants shared hopes for what a successful strategy might achieve:

- Caregivers feel more connection
- Caregivers feel more supported and have supports they can rely on
- People can find resources easily
- People needing care have dignity + agency
- People can age in right place
- No one feels like a burden
- Everyone has the ability to thrive
- Health system values care as much as cure

Advice

They also shared advice for developing and implementing the strategy:

- Focus on support for person, caregiver and community
- Focus on building relationships, engagement and trust
- Ensure partner commitment + continuity
- Ensure clear roles and expectations
- Have a flexible action plan
- Make it practical and actionable.
- Don’t duplicate or reinvent.
- Build on what’s worked.
- Be nimble, adaptive and responsive; use rapid PDSA cycles .

Potential Priority Areas

The follow options for priorities to address in the **Innovating Integrated Support for Alberta's Family Caregivers** Strategy & Action Plan emerged from the interviews for further discussion and input. These are not presented in any order of priority.

A
Identify caregivers in health and social/community care service provision and policy.

G
Identify family caregivers' needs and risks early in the care trajectory and provide timely access to supports and services.

M
Address the gap in practical supports to enhance family caregiver quality of life and wellbeing

B
Recognize and integrate family caregivers as essential partners in the care team.

H
Engage family caregivers in conversations about their needs to provide care and maintain their wellbeing.

N
Strengthen mental health supports for family caregivers.

C
Incorporate caregivers in care planning and pathways, ensuring they are recognized, consulted and their role is defined.

I
Enhance access to flexible services, such as respite care and day programs, to meet diverse family caregiver and care recipient needs, offering family caregivers choice and control through supportive policies and practices.

O
Expand workplace supports for employed family caregivers.

D
Document caregiver involvement in patient and caregiver records; enhance data collection for care co-ordination and evaluation/ research (Connect Care)

J
Ensure facilitation in navigation with processes for warm hand-offs, integrating care co-ordination at point of care with a clear provider responsibility.

P
Design culturally safe care models that respect family caregivers' diversity, ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion as core principles.

E
Clarify privacy and consent processes to support active caregiver involvement

K
Enhance continuity of care and communication among providers to reduce challenges in navigation and co-ordination. Ensure referral outcomes are communicated to both the referring provider and the family caregiver.

Q
Reduce the financial burden of family caregiving through targeted financial supports.

F
Train health and social/community care providers on best practices for including caregivers and ensure resources to include caregivers are available.

L
Integrate health and social/community services to streamline co-ordination for family caregivers and care providers

R
Develop a robust research and evaluation framework to measure the impact of family caregiver support initiatives

Appendix A:

Participants Interviewed July - September 2024

Ambere Porter, Alzheimer Society of Alberta and NWT
Arlene Huhn, Alzheimer Society of Alberta and NWT
Barb Ferguson, Dementia Network Calgary
Blair Wold, Connecting People and Communities for Living Well
Brian Schmidt, Alberta Health Services
Carla Moore, Leduc Beaumont Primary Care Network
Cathy Ault, Age Friendly Cold Lake
Darrel Gregory, Caregivers Alberta
Debra Samek, Alberta Health Services
Dr. Carole Estabrooks, University of Alberta
Dr. Haidong Liang, West Edmonton Seniors Activity Centre
Dr. Jacqueline Pei Otter, University of Alberta
Dr. Jennifer Stickney Lee, St. Albert
Dr. Jim Silvius, Alberta Health Services
Dr. Karenn Chan, Edmonton
Dr. Michelle Grinman, Calgary
Dr. Richard Lewanczuk, Alberta Health Services
Dr. Sheny Khera, Edmonton
Dr. Trevor Byers, Leduc
Dr. Vivian Ewa, Alberta Health Services
Elaine Finseth, Alberta Health Services
Gail Burns, Edmonton O-day/min Primary Care Network
Helen Lightfoot, Connecting People and Communities for Living Well
Holly Mattias, University of Alberta
Isabel Henderson, Alberta Health Services
Jennifer Olson, Covenant Health
Jennifer Salt, Alberta Health Services
Jocelyn Cuthbert Mora, carya
Johnna Lowther, Caregivers Alberta
Judy Birdsell, Imagine Citizens Network
Karen McDonald, Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton
Kim Brundit, Alzheimer Calgary
Kym Schreiner, Edmonton Seniors Co-ordinating Council
Lesley Myles, Alberta Health Services
Lisa Stebbings, carya
Lola Fariyibi, Unison at Kerby Centre
Megan Hincks, carya
Natalie Joly, ElderCare Edmonton
Rhonda Romolock, Huntington's Society of Canada Edmonton Chapter
Sabrina Ball, Alberta Health Services
Sarah Allen, Unison at Kerby Centre
Shawna McGhan, Alberta Health Services
Sheila Hallett, Edmonton Seniors Co-ordinating Council
Stephanie Banszky, Healthy Aging Alberta