



# Backgrounder: Consultation 2010

## Creating Canada's First Provincial Caregiver Strategy

### **Families and friends provide 90% of care, but receive little support or recognition**

Caregivers, those who care for a family member or friend living with challenges owing to illness, disability or old age, are an essential part of our social and health systems. They provide between 80% and 90% of the care required by persons with long-term conditions, saving our health system billions of dollars each year. Their caregiving role can be stressful, isolating, and have a negative impact on their physical, mental, and financial health. And yet, caregivers are often invisible: they receive little recognition and largely insufficient support in their critical role.

### **ACGA leading an initiative to develop Canada's first provincial caregiver strategy**

The Alberta Caregivers Association (ACGA) will lead a consultation process to create Canada's first provincial caregiver strategy, supported by our Consultation Committee, whose core members include:

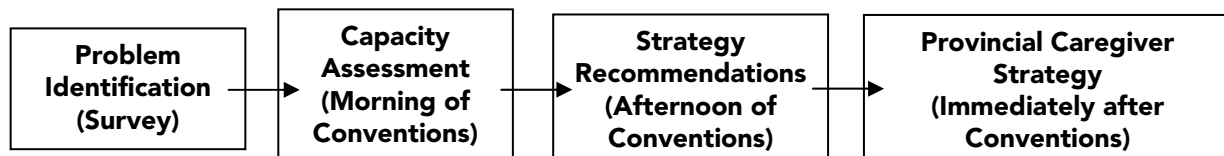
- University of Alberta (Nursing)
- University of Calgary (Social Work)
- University of Lethbridge (Nursing)
- Alberta Health Services - Seniors Health
- Family Caregiver Centre (AHS)
- Alberta College of Occupational Therapists (Professional Colleges)
- Alberta Disabilities Forum (Illness and Disability Organizations)
- Representatives from the ACGA's Board of Directors (Caregivers)

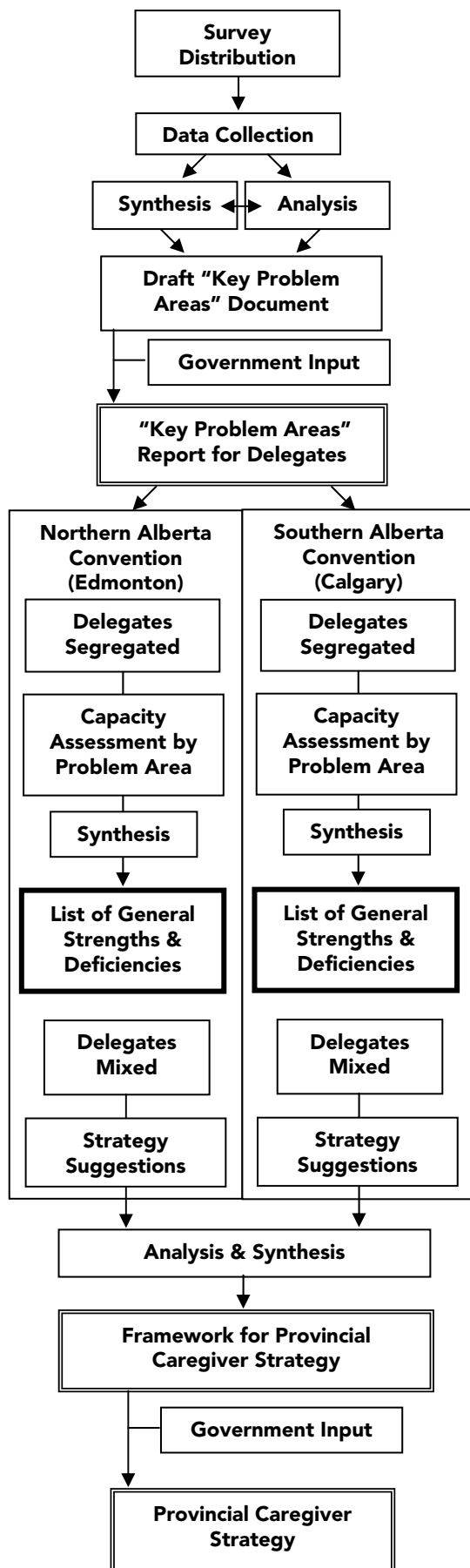
This is not a government-funded activity; instead, it will be resourced primarily from the ACGA's own funds, unrestricted corporate grants, and delegate fees in order to ensure an independent process. We are depending on the support of institutional and community-based service providers and agencies to help us distribute the survey to caregivers and recruit convention delegates, including allied health professionals, representatives from service providing organizations and businesses, and caregivers from urban and rural areas.

### **Four-part process to gather input from caregivers, professionals, and service providers**

The strategy will highlight the issues that caregivers face everyday, and identify tangible solutions and supports that government, service providers and community agencies can develop and implement to better serve the needs of Alberta's caregivers. The overall process, which includes a survey over the summer and two conventions in October, is comprised of four parts:

- **Problem Identification**
  - Caregivers identify challenges they face through open-ended survey
- **Capacity Assessment**
  - Convention delegates identify deficiencies and strengths
- **Strategy Recommendations**
  - Delegates recommend strategies based on capacity assessment
- **Framework & Strategy Development**
  - Consultation Committee analyzes and synthesizes (combines) information from survey and conventions and engages government for input and feedback





## Problem Identification: Survey of Alberta's Caregivers

The first step in the consultation process is to identify the challenges that Alberta's caregivers face. Surveys will focus on eight areas of concern:

- Personal and Interpersonal Factors
  - e.g. effects on caregivers' health, relationships
- Awareness and Recognition of the Caregiver Role
  - e.g. in general public, among family/friends
- Economic Security
  - e.g. income, expenses, savings
- Employment and Workplace Supports
  - e.g. career/education impact, time off
- Information on Programs, Services, & Resources
  - e.g. on caregiving, how to provide optimal care
- System Navigation
  - e.g. working with professionals, accessing services
- Respite Supports
  - e.g. availability, accessibility
- Community-based Supports
  - E.g. support from churches, businesses, agencies

The survey will focus on capturing the experience of caregivers through telling their stories of challenges, barriers, and other problems. The gathered information will be used to create a document – the "Key Problem Areas" Report – to be distributed to delegates prior to the conventions and serve as a starting point for the next steps of the consultation process.

## Capacity Assessment and Strategy Recommendations: Conventions in Edmonton and Calgary

Building on the issues identified by the surveys, two identical conventions will bring caregivers, professionals, service providers, and community agencies from around Alberta together to (1) identify existing deficiencies and strengths related to each of the problem areas and (2) recommend ways forward that would address key problems by mobilizing strengths and resolving deficiencies that were identified.

The conventions are planned for Edmonton on October 22, 2010 and Calgary on October 29, 2010. Attendance for each convention will be limited to 150 delegates and support will be available to facilitate the participation of rural caregivers.

## Developing the Caregiver Strategy: Post Convention

Following the convention, members of the Consultation Committee will review the results of the surveys and conventions and develop a framework for a provincial caregiver strategy based on the strategies, capacities, and problems identified throughout the entire process. Government feedback will be solicited on the framework to develop the final strategy.