

# Who Is Caring for Canada's Caregivers?

**Dr. Samir Sinha MD, DPhil, FRCPC, AGSF**

Director of Health Policy Research  
National Institute on Ageing

Director of Geriatrics  
Sinai Health System & University Health Network

**QIISP Conference**  
**September 2<sup>nd</sup> , 2020**

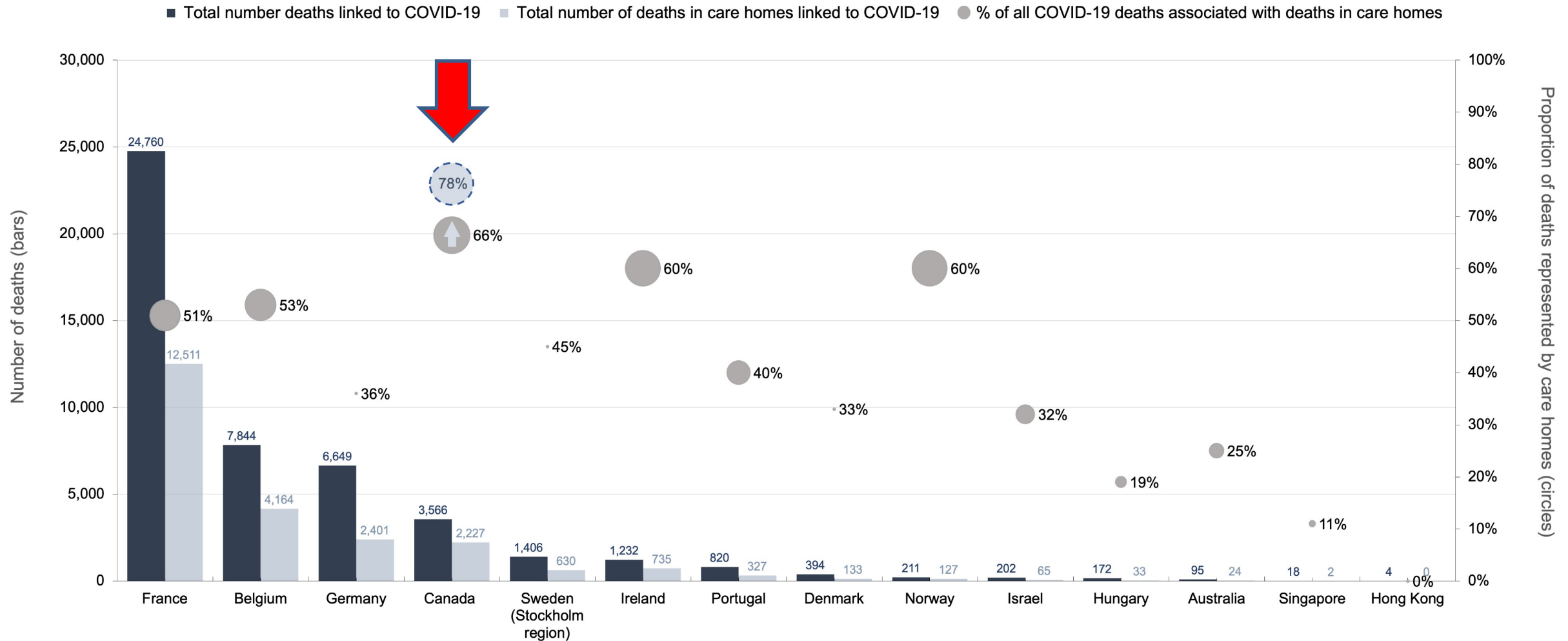
[www.nia-ryerson.ca](http://www.nia-ryerson.ca)  @RyersonNIA / @DrSamirSinha



# COVID-19 Has a Predilection for the Old

- Most Novel Viruses Affect those with Less Developed and Weakened Immune Systems: Young, Old and Chronically Ill
- CASE FATALITY RATES:
  - <18 = <1%
  - 18-59 = 1-2%
  - 60-69 = 3%
  - 70-79 = 8%
  - 80-89 = 15%
  - 90+ = 25%
  - LTC – 30-34%

# A National Tragedy and A Dubious Distinction

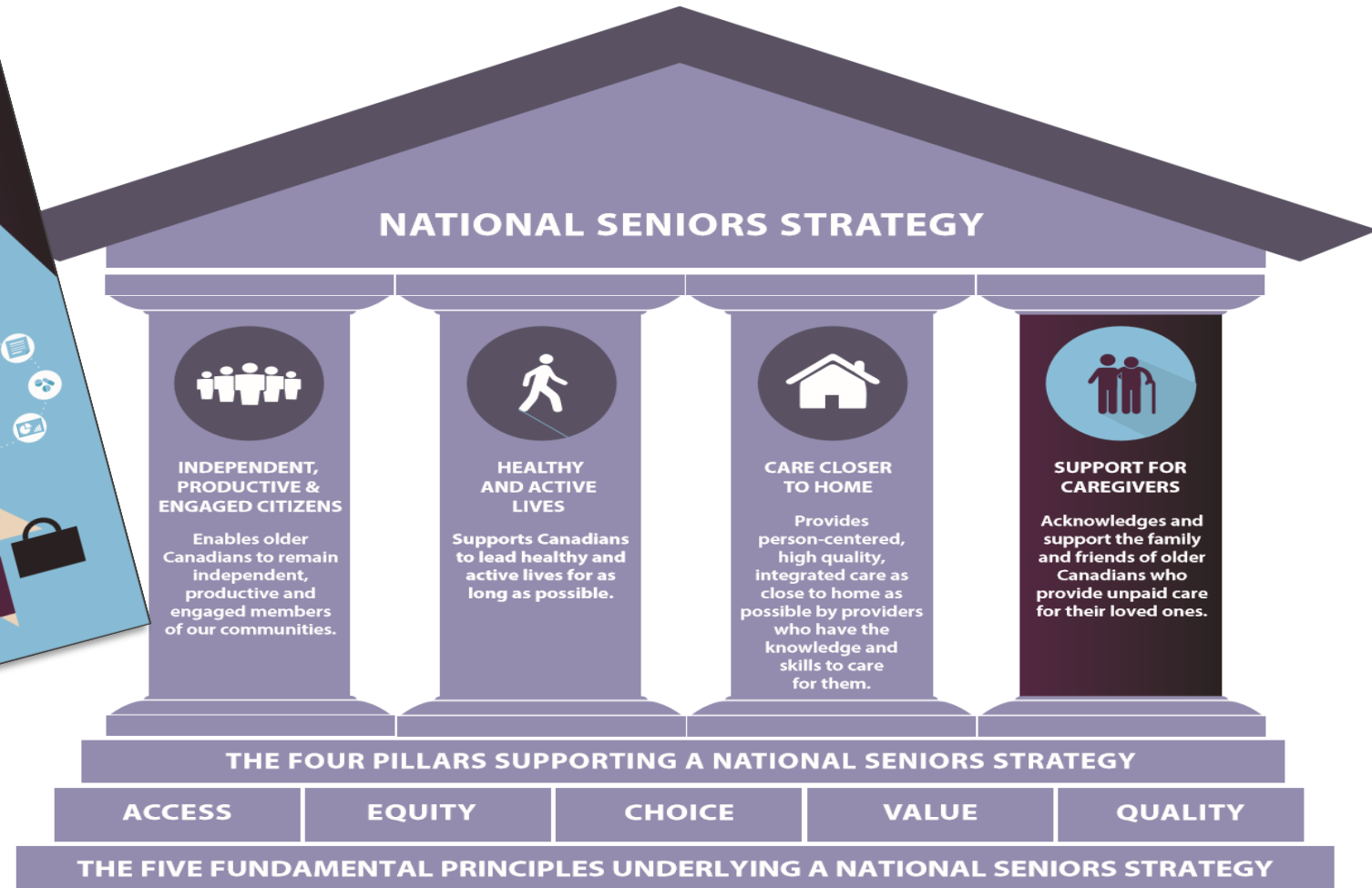
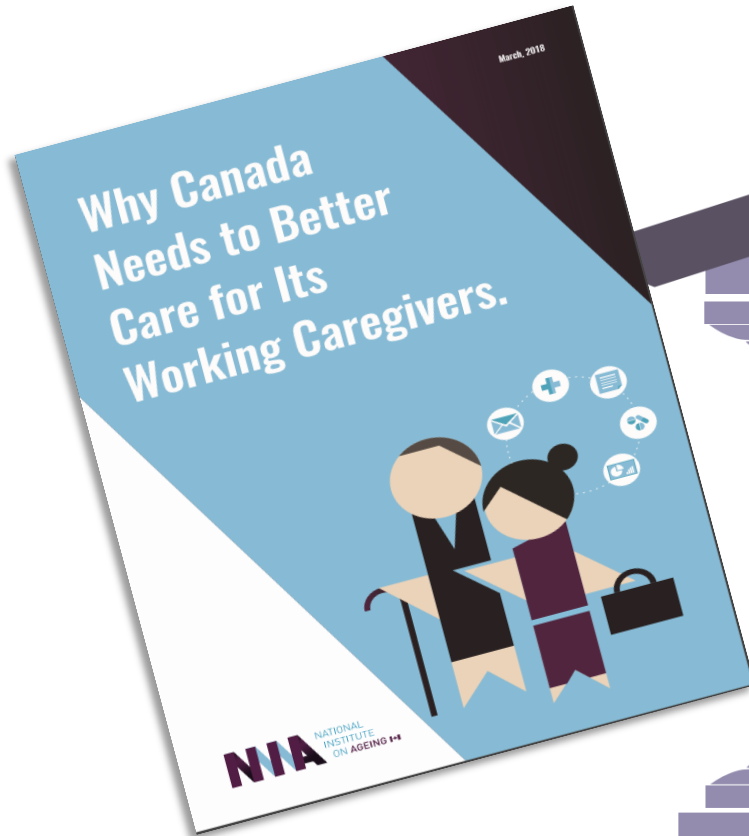


# COVID-19 and Caring for Older Canadians

## Several Important Caregiving Pandemic Paradigms Have Arisen

- With Older Adults told to Self-Isolate – Family, Friends and Community Agencies became needed to Address Basic Needs – food, transportation
- Many Older Adults and their families requiring Home Care, no longer wanted to take the added risk of accessing external care supports
- A number of families no longer wanted their loved ones in nursing or retirement homes settings given these settings greater vulnerability to outbreaks and deaths
- Families and friends already balancing caregiving duties were likely now having increased demands on their time.

# 'Support for Caregivers' is an NSS Pillar



# Who Are Canada's Caregivers?

- Approximately 8.1 million Canadians had provided care to another person within the preceding year, while 30% were “Sandwich Generation” caregivers.
- Approximately 6.1 million Canadians, or 35% of employed Canadians, are working and balancing caregiving responsibilities at the same time
- Women were more likely to spend 20 hours or more per week providing care, while men on average spent less than one hour per week providing care
- Women take 30% more time off than men do to provide care and are more likely to:
  - Reduce work hours, work part time, retire earlier, or leave work temporarily to become caregivers

Over **430,000** Canadians  
currently have unmet  
home care needs,  
while **40,000** are  
on nursing home  
wait lists.



(Gilmour, 2018b)





Between 2019 and 2050, the cost of public care in nursing homes and private homes will more than triple, growing from **\$22 billion to \$71 billion** annually (in constant 2019 dollars).





Between 2019 and 2050, there will be approximately **30%** fewer close family members available to provide unpaid care.



By 2050, the average unpaid family caregiver will need to increase their efforts by **40%** to keep up with care needs. More than twice the number of Canadian seniors will find themselves drawing on unpaid support.



# Challenges Faced by Older Canadians...

- Understanding what is available and how to navigate it
- Care that is available doesn't always provide flexibility and choice
- Care recipients and providers have diverse needs and views

# Challenges Faced by Paid Care Providers + Unpaid Caregivers...

## ➤ Challenges for Paid Care Providers

- Problems with the recruitment and retaining of staff
- Burnout due to understaffing, inadequate training, support and stress
- Injuries and Violence

## ➤ Challenges for Unpaid Caregivers

- Caregivers Remain Largely Invisible and their Roles Remain Inadequately Recognized
- The Current Lack of Support for Working Caregivers affects Canadian Economic Productivity
- The Health Care System Is Difficult for Caregivers to Navigate
- There Are Financial, Emotional, and Physical Costs of Being a Caregiver in Canada
- Caregivers are not Usually Provided with any Formal Information or Training to Support their Caregiving Responsibilities

# Where to Find More Information

Please visit us at [www.ryerson.ca/nia](http://www.ryerson.ca/nia) and  
<https://www.nia-ryerson.ca/covid-19-long-term-care-resources>

Follow Us on  @RyersonNIA

All NIA White Papers can be found at: <https://www.nia-ryerson.ca/reports>

# Thank You!

## **Samir K. Sinha MD, DPhil, FRCPC, AGSF**

Director of Geriatrics,  
Sinai Health System and the University Health Network, Toronto  
Director of Health Policy Research, National Institute on Ageing  
Associate Professor of Medicine, Family and Community Medicine  
Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, University of Toronto

✉ samir.sinha@sinaihealth.ca

🐦 @DrSamirSinha

www.nia-ryerson.ca    🐦 @RyersonNIA

