



**For Immediate Release**

**Attention: Assignment editors, health and lifestyle reporters, seniors reporters**

## **VON CANADA LAUNCHES NEW BILINGUAL WEB PORTAL FOR CANADA'S THREE MILLION CAREGIVERS**

**September 16, 2008 OTTAWA, ON** – Today, VON Canada (Victorian Order of Nurses) launched a groundbreaking new tool for Canada's nearly three million caregivers: "Caregiver Connect...from Caring to Sharing/De l'entraide au partage...aidants en réseau." This innovative bilingual web portal will provide access to information and resources that caregivers need to care for themselves, to provide better quality care to their family members and/or friends, and to connect and share with other caregivers through a virtual discussion forum.

"VON Canada supports caregivers and provides care for families and individuals from Newfoundland to British Columbia - we know first hand the questions and challenges that caregivers encounter," said Dr. Judith Shamian, President and CEO of VON Canada. "Caregivers are an essential part of the Canadian health care system – providing over \$5 billion in savings on health care costs. But caregiving can be isolating – and one of the goals of Caregiver Connect is to enhance autonomy, independence, and quality of life for caregivers and for those whom they provide care. The new Caregiver Connect portal is a one-stop shop of vital information for Canada's caregivers."

When a caregiver visits [www.caregiver-connect.ca](http://www.caregiver-connect.ca) – he or she can check out the latest information related to a specific health condition, click on links to Government of Canada programs, find information on working and caregiving, legal and financial assistance and home care programs, and connect with fellow caregivers and experts in the virtual meeting place of the portal's caregiver communities.

"It's important to recognize and support the role of the caregiver as care delivery continues to move into the community," said Richard Alvarez, President and CEO of Canada Health Infoway. "Equipping caregivers with this valuable tool will allow them to network and uncover valuable resources to help them provide the care their friends and loved ones need."

The Caregiver Connect portal will provide concise, current information for health professionals who work with Canada's caregivers and will give caregivers access to communities of practice and online, virtual support of their work. The portal content is designed to respond to research suggesting that caregivers require assistance regarding how to navigate the health care system, how to provide physical care, and how to deal with their personal response to caregiving.

"Caregiver Connect is an excellent example of how the innovative use of technology and of alternate methods of care can assist clients and Canada's health care system as a

whole,” said Dr. Shamian. “Our ultimate goal is to develop and provide a comprehensive and accessible support and information resource for caregivers in communities, hamlets, and cities across Canada.”

The Caregiver Portal project is funded, in part, through a \$1 million investment by Canada Health Infoway. VON Canada has also partnered with the Waterloo Institute for Health Informatics Research (WIHIR) for multi-disciplinary expertise and guidance, as well as assistance with health informatics. The portal has been developed in conjunction with, and ongoing involvement of, a national advisory committee and a content panel.

VON Canada is dedicated to being a leader in the delivery of innovative comprehensive health and social services and to influencing the development of health and social policy in Canada. We are a national health organization and registered charity offering a wide range of community health care solutions that meet the needs of Canadians from coast to coast. VON Canada is committed to continuous quality improvement and is accredited by Accreditation Canada.

[www.von.ca](http://www.von.ca)  
[www.caregiver-connect.ca](http://www.caregiver-connect.ca)

Canada Health Infoway is an independent, not-for-profit organization funded by the federal government. *Infoway* jointly invests with every province and territory to accelerate the development and adoption of electronic health record projects in Canada. Fully respecting patient confidentiality, these secure systems will provide clinicians and patients with the information they need to better support safe care decisions and manage their own health. Accessing this vital information quickly will help foster a more modern and sustainable health care system for all Canadians.

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