

## Visit Peel's Caregiver Symposium this Saturday

People who are caregivers for loved ones often find it difficult to manage their responsibilities while balancing work and other life priorities.

To help address that, Peel Region is holding a Caregiver Symposium this Saturday (Sept. 24).

Drop in anytime between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at Bramalea Retirement Residence, 30 Peel Centre Dr., Brampton (just east of Dixie Road, north side of Bramalea City Centre).

Speak to experts who understand the challenges and can help find supports and resources. Meet other caregivers with similar challenges. Learn more about community services (more than 20 service and product exhibitors will be in attendance), self-help tips for caregiving, balancing work priorities and taking care of one's self.

Three experts will speak about their organization's services and resources from 10:45 to 11:45 a.m., and again at 1 to 2 p.m. They are Robin Stainton, public education coordinator with Alzheimer Peel; Vita Vaitonia of the Ontario Caregivers Coalition; and Mary Wideman, senior elder help advisor with Help for Mom.

Approximately 3.3 million, or 29 per cent of Ontarians provide care to a loved one. About three out of four caregivers (76 per cent or 2.5 million people) balance caregiving and work.

Informal caregivers are unpaid individuals who care for a loved one in need of social and personal care. They may be spouses, adult children, partners or friends of a person in declining health, with physical limitations, and/or in cognitive decline. Caregivers develop new bonds and take on new roles with the loved ones they care for.

Becoming a caregiver by choice or as a result of an abrupt life change can be a very stressful, overwhelming experience. Caregivers are regularly challenged with balancing care responsibilities, work and other life priorities, often leading to emotional and physical exhaustion, as well as self-neglect. As every caregiver's journey is different, the need for support and resources differs as well.