

**Caregiver Agencies see a 70 – 90% Drop in Placements Following Changes by the Government of Canada to the Live-in Caregiver Program
“Significant Improvements” Bring Burden to Families**

Vancouver, BC – July 5, 2010 – Recent changes to Immigration Canada’s Foreign Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) have increased the burden on Canadian families through high costs and increased risks associated with hiring an overseas caregiver. The “Balanced improvements” have produced a significant decrease in the number of families using the program.

On April 1, 2010, Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Jason Kenney, made it mandatory that any family hiring a live-in caregiver for children, elderly or disabled care must pay all travel costs (including airfare), medical insurance, worker’s compensation premiums plus all employee recruitment costs.

“The Association of Caregiver & Nanny Agencies Canada (ACNA) applauds the Government for its efforts at bringing much needed improvements to the LCP,” said Manuela Gruber Hersch, President, “but the changes have reduced the capability of Canadian families to hire overseas caregivers. Not only is it much less affordable, but there is no protection or risk mitigation for those who make the investment.”

Results from three consecutive surveys taken by over 100 Caregiver & Nanny agencies over the last three month across Canada show a significant drop in placements, ranging from 70 - 90%, as a result of the increased risks and financial burden on employers.

Although the employing family must pay all associated costs, the caregiver has no obligation to stay with the family and can terminate employment at any time. As a result, Canadian families are vulnerable to applicants who abuse the LCP by coming to Canada at no personal expense, staying long-term and seeking other employment. As families shy away from utilizing the program, this in turn limits job opportunities for overseas caregivers. Individuals willing to provide much needed caregiver services in Canada have little choice but to turn to illegitimate off shore agencies for assistance.

Currently, Canada has no universally affordable childcare option, leaving some families with few alternatives other than hiring an overseas caregiver. Should the caregiver leave, many families struggle to find replacement workers. This can be emotionally and financially taxing, heightened by the fact that families typically assist the caregiver to adapt to Canadian culture, often making a

substantial investment of time and dollars to train and teach the employee. The family carries the full cost of this expense – in contrast to government funded integration services provided to other categories of immigrants.

ACNA calls on Minister Jason Kenney not to treat private families accessing the LCP the same as business corporations accessing the Temporary Foreign Worker program. The corporation's main objective is to grow revenue and turn a profit, while the family's objective is to raise healthy children and provide care for future and senior Canadians.

As ACNA predicted in December 2009 when the proposed changes were first announced, the changes have had a profound impact on the industry and on Canadian families—who have stopped hiring. Families wanting to hire a foreign caregiver must apply for a Labour Market Opinion (LMO), a process that demonstrates that the family has adhered to certain requirements. Current issued Labour Market Opinions numbers for April 2010 are at 1,949, a number above the average. ACNA attributes this to Canadian families rushing to submit their applications before the April 1st deadline which would make them obligated to shoulder the new changes (airfare etc), and thus higher costs. ACNA estimates a huge drop to come in June 2010, which would be in line with the survey results.

As a result of these changes to the program, many reputable caregiver agencies have closed down and many families are left with no elder or child care. "The revisions to the Live-in Caregiver Program are having a negative effect on family life and are further eroding Canadian productivity," finished Gruber Hersch.

ACNA Canada is an industry association of employment agencies who provide nannies and caregivers to Canadian employers.

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