

# QUICK GUIDE TO HELPING EMPLOYEES IN CAREGIVING ROLES

*Caregivers* provide assistance for another person's social or health needs. Caregiving may include help with one or more activities important for daily living such as bathing and dressing, paying bills, shopping, and providing transportation. It also may involve emotional support, or help with managing a chronic disease or disability. Caregiving responsibilities can increase and change as the recipient's needs increase, which may result in additional strain on the caregiver.<sup>3</sup>



In 2014, 14.5% (46.3 million) of the US population was aged 65 or older. This number is projected to reach 23.5% (98 million) by 2060.<sup>1</sup>



Aging adults experience higher risk of chronic disease. In 2012, 60% of older adults managed two or more chronic conditions.<sup>1</sup>



Approximately 25% of U.S. adults 18 years of age and older reported providing care or assistance to a person with a long-term illness or disability in the past 30 days.<sup>1</sup>



Caregivers are at increased risk for negative health consequences, including stress and depression, and need increased support to preserve their own health. These risks are greater for caregivers of people with Alzheimer's and related dementias.<sup>1</sup>



In 2016, 64 million Americans (1 in 5) lived in multi-generational households.<sup>2</sup>



According to AARP, adults age 65+ are expected to outnumber children by 2030.<sup>4</sup>

## Employees as Caregivers

Now more than ever, the need for providing employees support around caregiving is essential.

In fact, caregiving impacts more employees than you might expect: 20% of employees are caregivers (NBGH, 2018).

As indicated by the CDC, some of the unintended consequences felt by caregivers include<sup>5</sup>:



Elevated levels of depression and anxiety



Higher use of psychoactive medications



Worse self-reported physical health



Compromised immune function



Increased risk of early death

## How Employers Can Help



1. Create a communication campaign to educate employees on what's available as they may not be aware of their total benefit offering. This may include things like:
  - » Policies and programs that support work/life balance (Maternity leave, FMLA, etc.)
  - » Behavioral health resources and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offerings
  - » Discount programs/partners available through your organization



2. Financial resources are essential as the majority of caregivers spend around \$7,000 a year to cover the costs of things such as medical equipment, assistive devices and home care services. This may include:
  - » Financial well-being classes/information
  - » Financial literacy resources
  - » Offering a financial advisor at a reduced or subsidized cost



3. Allow employees the flexibility and understanding they need. Let them know that as their employer, you understand that one size does not fit all and that you support them and are willing to work with them. Some ways to be flexible and get creative in supporting your employees may include:
  - » Allowing them time to leave work to attend medical appointments with the person they are caring for.
  - » Provide them with the ability to work remote when needed so they may be with the person they are caring for.
  - » Create a caregivers support group within your organization. This provides a community of peers that are going through similar experiences and can help each other by sharing support and ideas.
  - » Provide leadership training around this topic with all levels of leadership so they are prepared to have these conversations and communicate the same overall message to employees in their areas.
  - » Include self-care information, resources and tools to all of your employees, reminding them that they must care for themselves in order to care for others. (Recommend [WELCOA Self-Care Essentials](#) and/or [WELCOA Health & Wellness Brochures](#) for break rooms, onsite fitness centers, etc.)
  - » Include programs, information, or resources around stress management and resiliency for your employees.

## Resources

Check out these other WELCOA resources that can be helpful for caregivers:

- » Employee Facing Caregiver Quick Guide: [welcoa.org/resources/quick-guide-self-care-for-caregivers](http://welcoa.org/resources/quick-guide-self-care-for-caregivers)
- » Beating Burnout: [welcoa.org/resources/quick-guide-beating-burnout](http://welcoa.org/resources/quick-guide-beating-burnout)
- » Low Stress Eating: [welcoa.org/resources/low-stress-eating](http://welcoa.org/resources/low-stress-eating)
- » Personal Health Record: [welcoa.org/resources/personal-health-record](http://welcoa.org/resources/personal-health-record)
- » Health Bulletin (Better Safe: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others): [welcoa.org/resources/health-bulletins-march-2018](http://welcoa.org/resources/health-bulletins-march-2018)

Additional caregiver assistance - despite what employer resources are available, there are additional means of supporting caregivers. Other available resources include:

- » [https://nebgh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NEBGH-Caregiving\\_Practical-Guide-FINAL.pdf](https://nebgh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NEBGH-Caregiving_Practical-Guide-FINAL.pdf)
  - » <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/>
  - » <https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/developmaterials/audiences/olderadults/tipsforcaregivers.html>
  - » <https://www.caregiving.org/resources/>
  - » <https://www.hhs.gov/programs/providers-and-facilities/resources-for-caregivers/index.html>
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## SOURCES

1. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/older-adults>
2. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/05/a-record-64-million-americans-live-in-multigenerational-households/>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/caregiving/caregiver-brief.html>
4. <https://www.aarp.org/home-family/friends-family/info-2018/census-baby-boomers-fd.htm>
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/caregiving/index.htm>