

CAREGIVING FACTS

Definition of caregiving:

Caregiving is care for a relative or friend to help them take care of themselves. This may include helping with personal needs or household chores, managing a person's finances, arranging for outside services, or visiting regularly to see how they are doing. This report focuses on caregiving for older adults and especially on care that is currently unpaid.

Prevalence:

43.5 million adults in the US—about 18.2% of Americans over age 18—reported providing unpaid care in the previous 12 months. Approximately 34.2 million Americans provided care to an adult age 50 or older.

Who receives care today?

Nearly half of care recipients (47%) are over the age of 75, while 86% are age 50 or older. The oldest recipients require more caregiving time on average.

- Three-fifths (59%) of care recipients have a long-term physical condition and a quarter (26%) have a “memory problem.”
- A large majority of caregivers provide care for a relative (85%), with 49% caring for a parent or parent-in-law. About 10% are caring for a spouse.

Who provides care today?

About 80% of care at home is provided by unpaid (informal) caregivers, while paid caregivers provide 20%.

- The majority of caregivers are female (60%); but 40% are male. More than half of caregivers (53%) are age 50 or older. Nearly one in ten caregivers (7%) are over age 75.
- Working caregivers: Six in ten caregivers were employed at some point during the previous year and almost all of them reported having to make “workplace adjustments” (such as cutting back on working hours or taking a leave of absence) as a result of caregiving.

- Remote caregivers: While three-quarters of family caregivers live with or within 20 minutes of their care recipients, approximately 11% live an hour or more away.
- Complex caregiving: At least half of all caregivers have been called on to perform “medical/nursing tasks for care recipients with multiple chronic conditions,” which involved such tasks as managing multiple medications, wound care, giving injections or intravenous therapy, incontinence support, and serving as care coordinators. Caregivers often found themselves doing these complex tasks with little training or support from medical professionals.

Future projections:

Individuals 85 years and older—the oldest old—are one of the fastest growing segments of the population. In 2015, there are an estimated 5.9 million people 85+ in the United States. This figure is expected to increase to 19.4 million by 2050. This means that there could be an increase from 1.6 million to 6.2 million people age 85 or over with severe or moderate memory impairment in 2050.

- The Caregiver Support Ratio—the number of potential family caregivers (mostly adult children) aged 45-64 for each person aged 80 or older—is projected to drop from approximately 7:1 in 2010 to 4:1 in 2030.
- Six factors expected to drive demand for caregiving are: growth in the older population; extended years of disability; increased ethnic diversity; reduced economic status; health reform; and a decline in number of available caregivers.

The Family Caregiving Alliance maintains and regularly updates collections of caregiving statistics:
www.caregiver.org/caregiver-statistics