

THE CASE FOR CAREGIVING

*Why Middle Tennessee Employers
Should Support Employee Caregivers*

AUGUST 2019



COUNCIL ON
AGING

OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

ELDERCARE FINDINGS IN BRIEF

As a unique nonprofit charged with identifying and addressing the unmet needs of older adults and their families, the Council on Aging of Middle Tennessee (COA) has embarked on a journey to understand the impact of eldercare on employers and the needs of working caregivers.

In state rankings of long-term services and supports, Tennessee ranks 49th for support of family caregivers and 32nd for support of working caregivers¹. Although family caregivers provide more than one billion hours of care, they are frequently ill-prepared for their role. The 2014 Tennessee Governor's Task Force on Aging emphasized the need to improve education and support for family caregivers.

For the past 18 months, COA has studied the needs of working caregivers and employers while completing the Center for Nonprofit Management's Innovation Catalyst program. We partnered with Vanderbilt's Center for Quality Aging via a Community Engaged Research grant to conduct focus groups with working caregivers and to assess benefits of online support tools, namely Roobrik: Is It Time To Get Help? and COA's online Directory of Services. In addition, COA surveyed members of the Middle TN Society of Human Resource Management and Middle TN Employee Benefits Council to assess awareness of eldercare, current support for working caregivers and opinions about which benefits and services would be most helpful. This brief details key findings along with our resources to support working caregivers.

STATE RANKINGS



49TH
*for support of
family caregivers*

32ND
*for support of
working caregivers*

SCOPE OF THE ISSUE

According to the 2011 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, researchers estimate that more than one in six Americans working full-time or part-time report assisting with the care of an elderly or disabled family member, relative or friend. Among working caregivers of someone 50+, six in 10 working caregivers report their work has been affected by caregiving as noted in reports by the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and the AARP Public Policy Institute. Eighty percent believe caregiving impacts their ability to perform at their best at least part of the time.²



MORE THAN
1 IN 6
WORKING AMERICANS
REPORT ASSISTING
WITH CARE

WORK IS AFFECTED



THERE ARE 40 MILLION+ UNPAID CAREGIVERS IN THE U.S.

61%

ARE WORKING PROFESSIONALS

6 IN 10



REPORT THEIR WORK HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY CAREGIVING

With 10,000 baby boomers turning 65 every day through 2029, eldercare will continue to rise. There are more than 40 million unpaid caregivers of adults ages 65 and older in the U.S., and 61% of these caregivers are working professionals, including nearly half who work full time. Adults ages 45 to 64 are the most likely to be caregivers³. Family caregivers spend an average of 24.4 hours per week providing care, and nearly one in four spend more than 40 hours caregiving per week⁴.

In addition to the impact on employees, eldercare is costing employers. Lost productivity costs employers \$2,110 per working caregiver each year. Studies have also shown that healthcare costs are 8% higher for caregiving employees⁵.

According to a 2019 Harvard Business School report, it is estimated that **employers lose \$6.3 billion annually due to workplace disruptions related to eldercare**. Employers spent an additional \$6.6 billion a year to replace employees who left their agency due to eldercare responsibilities⁶. While the challenge of balancing caregiving and work occurs at all levels of an organization, **employees in mid-to-high levels of the organization experience greater challenges related to caring for older adults and are more likely to leave their position, taking their skills, talents and institutional knowledge with them⁷**.

Despite the rapidly growing older population and rising numbers of working caregivers, few employers currently offer specific eldercare information or benefit programs. In fact, **employers are missing the mark when it comes to creating a culture of care within their organizations**. A recent Harvard Business School survey found that employers' benefit offerings do not align with employee needs. **Despite 32% of employees departing the workplace to care for an older adult, fewer than 10% of employers offer eldercare benefits⁸**. To redirect the trend, organizations need to approach caregiving issues and support through the lens of talent recruitment and retention.

ELDERCARE IS COSTING EMPLOYERS

EMPLOYERS LOSE ANNUALLY

\$6.3 BILLION

DUE TO WORKPLACE DISRUPTIONS RELATED TO ELDERCARE



LOST PRODUCTIVITY COSTS EMPLOYERS



PER WORKING CAREGIVER EACH YEAR

ELDERCARE BENEFITS



\$3 TO \$13

RETURN FOR EVERY DOLLAR SPENT ON ELDERCARE BENEFITS

REDUCED TURNOVER INTENTION BY

5.9%

Research has shown that programs that support caregivers pay for themselves. A study funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation found that employers could anticipate a \$3 to \$13 return for every dollar spent on eldercare benefits⁹. Additionally, for each eldercare benefit, businesses have reduced turnover intention by 5.9%. **Availability and use of eldercare policies are positively associated with job commitment, satisfaction, productivity and improved employee recruitment.**¹⁰

WHAT WE LEARNED LOCALLY

In order to understand more clearly the needs of working caregivers in Middle Tennessee and the value of COA's co-branded Roobrik decision support tool and associated directory, COA conducted focus groups at four worksites with 19 total participants. After using the Roobrik tool and receiving a personalized "Care Fit" report, participants engaged in a guided discussion about the tool and their needs as caregivers.



They reported that the roobrik tool was easy and satisfying to use



They found that the tool's design helped them better understand their situations as caregivers and determine a plan of care.



They responded positively to the accompanying COA Directory of Services for locating local services and community resources



They suggested that information be added to help identify options for covering the costs of care

UNMET NEEDS

As caregivers at various stages of the eldercare experience, participants described a variety of their unmet needs, which impact the quality of the care they provide. The discussions of caregivers' needs fell into four categories:

1 INFORMATION
Need for information, especially related to medical and legal issues

3 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
Need for emotional support for themselves and their older family member

2 EXPERT GUIDANCE
Need for expert guidance to understand and discuss care options

4 WORKPLACE CULTURE
Need for caregiver friendly workplaces

According to Grace Smith, COA Executive Director

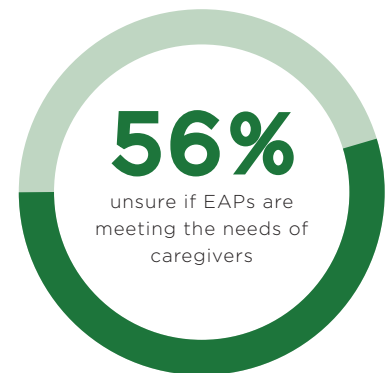
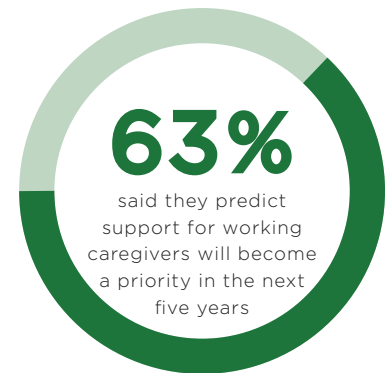
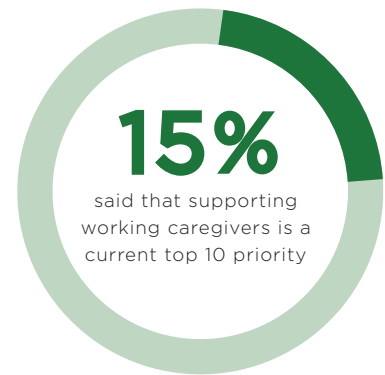
"We know that caregivers are often overwhelmed and don't know who to call. COA is a trusted resource that helps family caregivers navigate eldercare and connect with the most appropriate services and community resources for their situation. We want employers and caregivers to know that we can help."

HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONAL SURVEY & GUIDED INTERVIEWS

In addition to focus groups, COA surveyed members of the Middle TN Society of Human Resource Management and Middle TN Employee Benefits Council with 125 respondents. When asked where caregiving/eldercare falls within priorities for employee health and benefits, 15% of survey respondents said it was a top 10 priority. Sixty-one percent said they are aware of eldercare/caregiving but it's not a current priority. **Sixty-three percent said caregiving/ eldercare will become increasingly important in the next five years.**

Most employers indicated they are currently offering paid leave, employee assistance programs (EAP) or work/life programs, flex time and telecommuting to meet the needs of working caregivers. While 34% of respondents believe the EAP meets the needs of caregivers, 56% are unsure if EAPs are meeting the need.

Survey respondents indicated that the main drivers for employers offering these benefits are to enhance Work/Life culture, reduce absenteeism, recruit/retain talent and increase productivity.



When HR professionals were asked what would be most helpful to employers to support working caregivers, the top responses were



GUIDANCE FOR BEING A CAREGIVER FRIENDLY WORKPLACE



ACCESS FOR EMPLOYEES TO INFO/REFERRAL AND CONSULTATION



ONLINE TOOLS, TRAINING AND LINKS TO RESOURCES



PRINTED MATERIALS AND ON-SITE EDUCATION

FILLING THE GAP

Using these findings, COA has made it a priority in 2019 to begin partnering with employers to assist working caregivers. We've assembled an expert advisory board to guide development of services including: assessment and best practice consultations for employers, phone consultations for caregivers, on-site Lunch and Learns and online tools, training videos and links to resources. COA will utilize and provide copies of the agency's trusted resource guides, including the *Directory of Services* and *Aging & Caring: A Guide for Families and Caregivers*.



OUR RESOURCES

COA Directory of Services

Roobrik: Is It Time To Get Help?

Aging & Caring: A Guide for Families and Caregivers

Assessment & Best Practice Consults

Phone Consults for Caregivers

Lunch & Learns

LEARN MORE

To learn more about making your workplace more caregiver friendly and for additional information on partnering with COA, contact

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Both the
Roobrik: Is It Time To Get Help? decision support tool
and
COA Directory of Services
are available online at www.coamidtn.org

References :

¹ AARP, The Commonwealth Fund, and The SCAN Foundation, 2017 Long Term Services and Support Scorecard, <http://www.longtermscorecard.org>

² Fuller, Joseph, & Raman, Manjari, *The Caring Company*, (Harvard Business School, 2019), p.16

³ Stepler, Renee, *Five Facts about Family Caregiving*, (Pew Research, November 2015)

⁴ National Alliance for Caregiving & AARP, *Caregiving in the U.S.*, (June 2015)

⁵ MetLife Mature Market Group, National Alliance for Caregiving, and the University of Pittsburgh Institute on Aging. (2010). *The MetLife Study of Working Caregivers and Employer Health Costs: Double Jeopardy for Baby Boomers Caring for their Parents*

⁶ Fuller & Raman, *The Caring Company*, p. 10

⁷ Fuller & Raman, *The Caring Company*, p. 17

⁸ Fuller & Raman, *The Caring Company*, p. 17

⁹ *The Caregiver Resource Center, Eldercare Solutions for Businesses and their Employees*, (2018)

¹⁰ AARP & ReAct, *Determining the Return on Investment: Supportive Policies for Employee Caregivers*, (2016), p. 11-14



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