

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVING:

# Employer Practices Through a Policy Lens

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<b>01. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<hr/>	
<b>02. LANDSCAPE</b>	<b>5</b>
Understanding the Needs of Today's Family Caregivers	
<hr/>	
<b>03. POLICY</b>	<b>10</b>
An Analysis of Government & Employer Caregiving Supports	
<hr/>	
<b>04. ACTION</b>	<b>18</b>
Five Principles for Cross-Sector Caregiving Support	
<hr/>	
<b>05. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>21</b>
<hr/>	
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>22</b>
<hr/>	
<b>ENDNOTES</b>	<b>23</b>

# The Linchpin in Our Age of Longevity: Why the U.S. Must Improve Family Caregiver Support

As policymakers, businesses, and communities chart a course for the 2020s, they will need to identify catalysts to promote the health of the growing aging population, recovery from COVID-19, workplace productivity, healthcare system readiness, and economic growth. At the intersection of all these goals is family caregiving. Family caregivers represent a critical but undervalued linchpin in our society, and now is the time to showcase that value.

There are more than 53 million family caregivers in the U.S.—one-fifth of all American adults.<sup>1</sup> They make an immense contribution to the health and well-being of their families, their communities, and our society. U.S. healthcare systems, workplaces, and family units could not function effectively without their care, especially as the number of Americans 65+ will nearly double by 2060.<sup>2</sup> The vast majority of older adults want to age in their homes and communities—laying the groundwork for a dramatic increase in the need for family caregiving.<sup>3</sup>

As needs escalate, every American will likely provide some form of care at some point—even if they don't consider themselves caregivers. Caregiving encompasses a broad spectrum of activities, from providing assistance with medical tasks to helping manage finances to simply providing emotional support.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the national conversation has for too long under-appreciated or altogether overlooked family caregivers and their needs. While the role of a family caregiver has been spotlighted in recent years as demand for elder care has risen, many caregivers

still struggle to find support, information, tools, and resources. This has an impact on the care provided, and it also has negative implications for caregivers' own physical and mental health, finances, and careers.

Now, in 2021, momentum is finally growing. This year marks the start of the United Nations' and World Health Organization's Decade of Healthy Ageing, in which reforming long-term care and pursuing integrated approaches to care and healthy aging are at the center. In the U.S., President Joe Biden and other leaders have spotlighted family caregivers as central to our nation's infrastructure and therefore a national priority. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for employers to strengthen support for their caregiving employees.

Our nation's leaders must step up to ensure the sustainability of one of our most precious resources—family caregivers—and to ensure this critical and growing subset of the U.S. population is better recognized and supported.

# A New Perspective: Three Concepts to Shape Caregiver Support Policies

“Now is the time for employers and policy-makers to ensure comprehensive, well-designed benefits and policies for family caregivers in our aging society. By building on the current momentum, leaders can work across sectors to unlock a catalyst for health, productivity, and economic growth.”

—Michael W. Hodin, CEO, Global Coalition on Aging

The Global Coalition on Aging (GCOA), along with our member company Bank of America, has long studied the evolving landscape of elder caregiving and recognize the impending care crisis that is upon us, absent comprehensive public policies and employer practices to identify and support the growing ranks of family caregivers. We suggest three concepts—or lenses through which to evaluate caregiving needs—to help motivate action:

- **360° Family Care Approach:** Caregiving policies and benefits should be inclusive, providing both childcare and eldercare supports. While many solutions for childcare and eldercare are similar conceptually, we must also recognize the vastly different physical and emotional requirements of a family member providing elder care.
- **Policy Directions for Guidance in the Workplace:** Working caregivers make up the majority of all family caregivers in the U.S., so employers play a critical role in fostering environments supportive of caregivers. Government and workplace policies must recognize this role of employers as catalysts to drive change.
- **Financial Levers of Family Caregiving:** Family caregivers are increasingly financial caregivers, directly and indirectly paying for family members’ care needs. By setting a strong, economically supportive foundation for today’s caregivers and their families, we can pave the way for future generations of caregivers.

In this paper, we apply these concepts to identify key areas of need for family caregivers, analyze the current policy landscape, identify employer best practices, and propose five principles for public- and private-sector action. We invite leaders and organizations from across sectors to join us in this vital effort to support America’s family caregivers and in doing so, promote economic stability in an increasingly aging society.

# Understanding the Needs of Today's Family Caregivers

To develop effective caregiver support policies, we first need to understand the landscape for family caregivers: who they are, whom they care for, what challenges they face, and what kinds of support will make a difference.

*“In the age of longevity, family caregivers’ needs are continuously growing and evolving. Public policies and employer benefits aimed at healthier citizens and more productive workplaces can be made more effective if they are attuned to the realities and challenges that caregivers face every day.”*

—Lorna Sabbia, Head of Retirement & Personal Wealth Solutions, Bank of America

For most caregivers, the answers are tied to the aging of the U.S. population. The population pyramids below show the growing number of people living to older ages. Already, elder caregivers account for more than

80% of family caregivers overall.<sup>5</sup> And from 2018 to 2060, the number of Americans ages 65 and older is projected to nearly double from 52 million to 95 million.<sup>6</sup> This unprecedented number of older adults will lead to an unprecedented need for care: 70% of Americans 65+ require long-term care at some point in their lifetime.<sup>7</sup>

As the U.S. ages and care needs grow, so does the urgency of supporting family caregivers. Based on the three concepts discussed above, we see three primary areas of need: support for the care itself, especially the unique challenges of elder care; support for working caregivers; and support for the finances of caregiving.

## Gender Inequities in Care & COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has both spotlighted and exacerbated long-standing gender inequities in caregiving. Even before the pandemic, women accounted for two-thirds of primary caregivers in the U.S.<sup>8</sup> COVID-19 increased this burden by disrupting sources of child and elder care, while also posing a life-threatening risk to older care recipients and care-

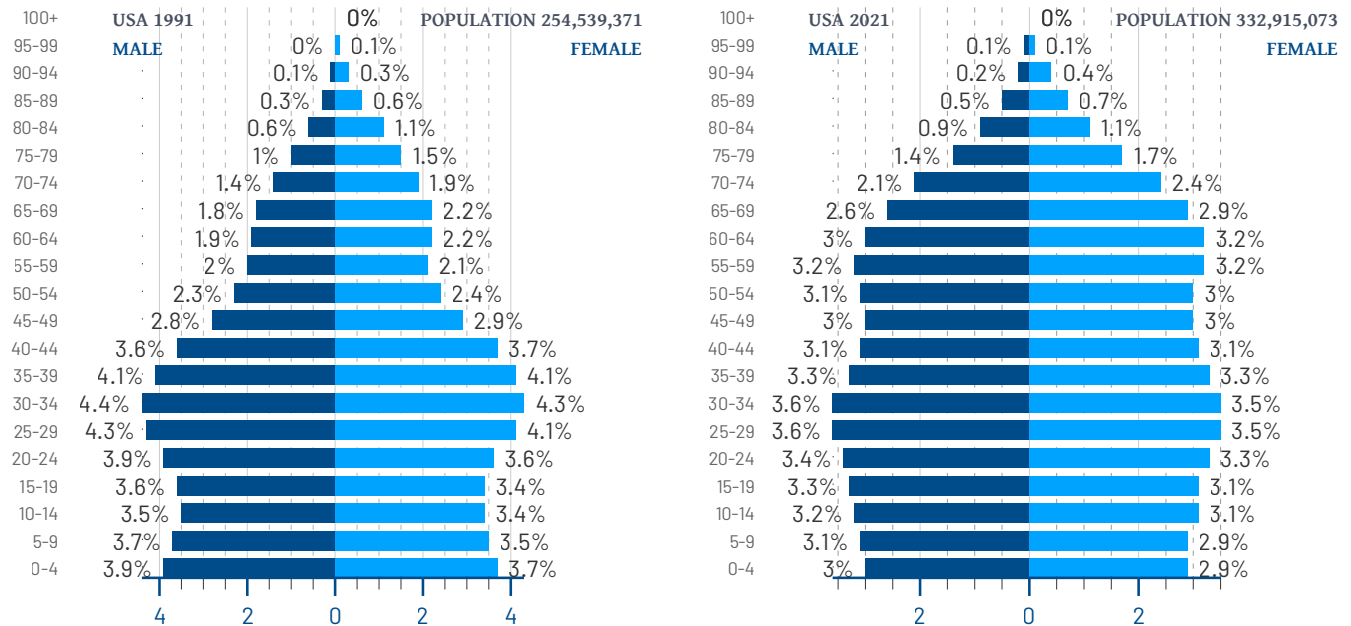
givers themselves. As a result, since the pandemic began:

- The U.S. female workforce participation rate dropped to the lowest level in over 30 years.<sup>9</sup>
- Women accounted for 53% of workforce exits during the first year of the pandemic.<sup>10</sup>

- 25% of women are considering exiting the workforce or downshifting their careers due to COVID-19.<sup>11</sup>

Greater support for family caregivers, especially working caregivers, is needed to reverse these inequities, help women return to and stay in the workforce, and fuel a long-term, equitable recovery for the U.S. economy.

FIGURE 1: U.S. Population Pyramid (1991 compared to 2021)



Source: <https://www.populationpyramid.net/united-states-of-america/2021/>

## 360° Family Care: The Unique Challenges of Elder Caregiving & the “Sandwich” Generation

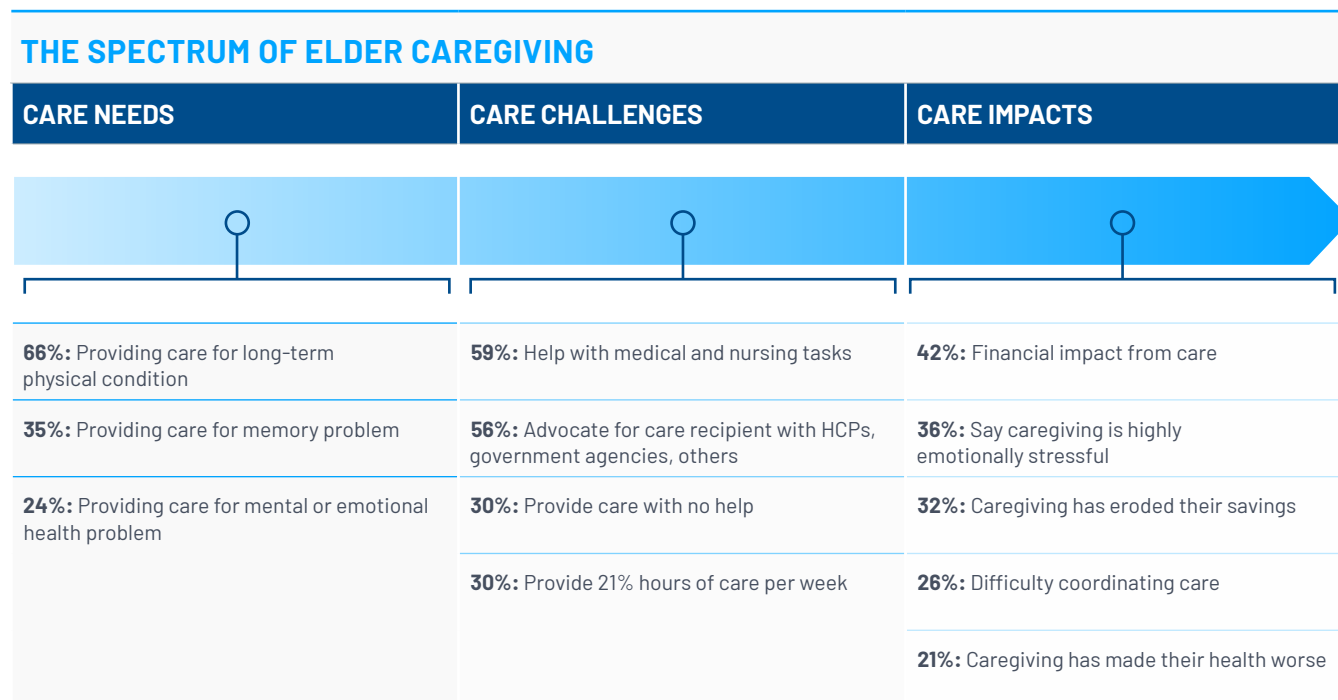
First, caregivers need help with care itself, especially elder care. While caregiving support has often focused on childcare, elder caregivers face unique challenges that demand greater attention.

Many elder caregivers provide high-intensity care for one or more complex, progressive conditions, such as Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. As care needs escalate, caregivers often face growing impacts to their physical, mental, and financial health. Too often, they shoulder this burden with little to no training, limited outside support, or entirely alone. Additionally,

around 11 million caregivers in the “sandwich” generation provide care to both older family members and children—doubling their care responsibilities.<sup>12</sup>

This care is often provided in the older adult or caregiver’s home, as more than three-quarters of older adults want to remain in their homes and communities as they age.<sup>13</sup> A combination of professional home care and family caregiving can help achieve older adult’s priorities and preferences, social connection, and autonomy, while also helping balance the complex physical and emotional demands on family caregivers—especially working caregivers.

FIGURE 2: The Spectrum of Elder Caregiving



SOURCE: [https://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AARP1340\\_RR\\_Caregiving50Plus\\_508.pdf](https://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AARP1340_RR_Caregiving50Plus_508.pdf)

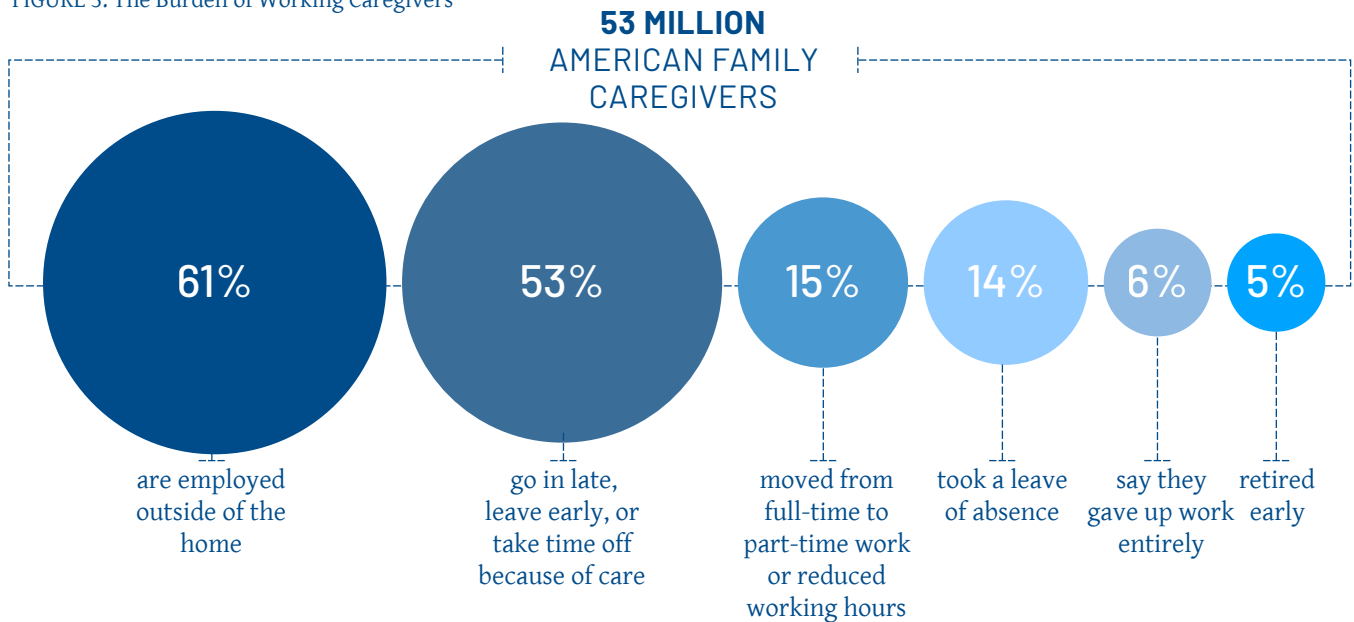
## Work & Care: A Difficult Balancing Act

Working caregivers need help balancing their work and caregiving responsibilities. 61% of America's 53 million family caregivers are employed outside of the home, and, among this group, 60% work 40 hours or more each week.<sup>14</sup> And as the share of "working-age" adults falls in the decades ahead, this balancing act will only become more common.

Working caregivers report a range of impacts that caregiving has on their jobs and careers. 53% say they go in late, leave early, or take time off because of care.<sup>15</sup> 15% moved from full-time to part-time work or reduced their working hours, and 14% took a leave of

absence.<sup>16</sup> Care forces some to leave the workforce altogether: 6% say they gave up work entirely, and 5% retired early.<sup>17</sup> And, while working parents—in particular mothers—are now more respected and even revered in the workplace, there is still a stigma surrounding elder care. Many caregivers fear that drawing attention to their care responsibilities in the workplace can make them seem less productive or can isolate them, and this prevents them from accessing needed benefits.

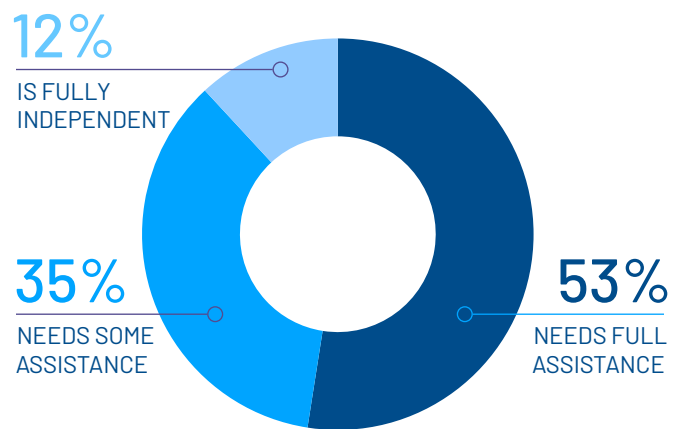
FIGURE 3: The Burden of Working Caregivers



## Money Matters: The Financial Levers of Caregiving

Caregivers need help managing the finances of care. 92% serve as “financial caregivers”—helping their family member track and pay bills, monitor financial activity, manage investments, file taxes, or providing financial support with their own money.<sup>18</sup> Together, it is estimated that U.S. financial caregivers spend more than \$190 billion each year on their care recipients’ out-of-pocket, care-related expenses.<sup>19</sup>

FIGURE 4: When Financial Caregiving Responsibilities Arise  
Percent of care recipients needing help managing finances two or more years into caregiving



SOURCE: <https://images.em.bankofamerica.com/HOST-03-19-0704/AgeWaveCaregiving-Whitepaper.pdf>



When coupled with work impacts, lost earnings, and missed benefits, this means caregiving can place a significant burden on the caregiver's own finances. 45% of family caregivers report that care led them to stop saving, take on more debt, use up their own savings, leave bills unpaid or paid late, or borrow money from family or friends.<sup>20</sup>

However, many caregivers lack access to the financial tools that can help them plan, save, and pay for the costs of care, especially those who have to give up employment with benefits because of their caregiving responsibilities.

## The Challenges of Long-Distance Caregiving & the Potential for Technology to Help

Caregivers who live an hour or more away from care recipients are considered long-distance caregivers—accounting for around 11% of all family caregivers.<sup>21</sup> Long-distance caregivers face a number of unique challenges:

- Average yearly out-of-pocket costs of \$12,000- \$12,700; roughly \$5,000 more than the average for all caregivers.<sup>22</sup>
- More likely to need to take unpaid time off from work, travel to see their care recipients, and hire professional caregivers.<sup>23</sup>
- More likely to report emotional distress than other types of caregivers.<sup>24</sup>

As highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, a range of technological solutions are emerging that can help long-distance caregivers. Video calls, social media, and other applications can help caregivers stay in touch with loved ones who need care. Caregivers can use more advanced telehealth and remote care applications to play an active role in coordinating care itself, such as technologies to communicate with providers, monitor medication, sense activity levels, or request help in emergencies.<sup>25</sup>

# An Analysis of Government & Employer Caregiving Supports

Both the public and the private sectors must step up responses to meet the needs of family caregivers—building a coordinated, cross-sector approach. An analysis of public policy and employer best practices indicates the opportunities for the greatest impact.

## Strengthening Caregiving Support: Public-Sector Policies & Proposals

Recently, in part in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, caregiving has been included in Biden Administration and Congressional leaders' policy proposals within efforts to strengthen national infrastructure. President Biden's campaign also featured "The Biden Plan for Mobilizing American Talent and Heart to Create A 21st Century Caregiving and Education Workforce," which recognized that "even before the pandemic, our country was experiencing a caregiving crisis."<sup>26</sup>

"[Caregivers] include everyone from an 18-year-old daughter caring for her mom who suddenly gets sick to a 40-year-old dad raising his child and caring for his own aging parents... Families are squeezed emotionally and financially. They need help, but too often, they can't afford it."

-President Joseph R. Biden<sup>27</sup>

There are a growing number of policies—sponsored and supported by Democrats and Republicans alike—that aim to support family caregivers. The table below analyzes recently enacted or proposed public policies based on their ability to meet the needs identified above: 360<sup>0</sup> caregiver support, caregiving and the workplace, and the finances of caregiving.

Detailed criteria for analysis is provided in the Appendix.

RECENTLY ENACTED FEDERAL POLICIES		ANALYSIS		
Policy Name & Date	Brief Description	Finances of caregiving	360° caregiver support	Caregiving and the workplace
<b>Medicare/Medicaid Expansion</b> <sup>28</sup>	Over the past ten years, Medicaid and Medicare have expanded to together make up more than 70% of home health spending.	●	●	●
<b>VA Mission Act (2018; Implemented 2020)</b> <sup>29</sup>	Gave more family caregivers access to the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers by expanding eligibility  Part of broader VA Mission Act expansion to include more injured or disabled veterans  Provides general support or comprehensive assistance through stipends, training, respite care, counseling, etc.	●	●	●
<b>Partially Reimbursed Home Care by Medicare (2020)</b> <sup>30</sup>	The CARES Act allowed nurse practitioners (NPs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs), and physician assistants (PAs) to certify and order in-person and virtual home health services  CMS is allowing the use of telecommunications technology to be included as part of the home health plan of care	●	●	●
<b>Executive Order on Strengthening Medicaid and Affordable Care Act (Jan 28, 2021)</b> <sup>31</sup>	Executive order to break down unnecessary barriers in Medicaid and ACA	●	●	●

NOTEWORTHY STATE POLICIES		ANALYSIS		
Policy Name & Date	Brief Description	Finances of caregiving	360° caregiver support	Caregiving and the workplace
<b>The CARE (Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable) Act</b> <sup>32</sup>	Helps ensure coordinated care transitions from the hospital to home; signed into law in 40 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands	●	●	●
<b>Minnesota's Essential Community Supports</b> <sup>33</sup>	Uses state funding to provide services to older adults without support. Qualified recipients receive services including emergency response team, homemaker services, caregiver support, and education	●	●	●
<b>Minnesota's &amp; Washington's Elder Waiver Programs</b> <sup>34</sup>	Provides support for family caregivers, including respite, counseling, training, and the Family Memory Care model that offers services to families taking care of an individual with dementia	●	●	●
<b>Hawaii's Kapuna Caregiver Program (2018)</b> <sup>35</sup>	Provides up to \$350 per week per eligible participants. The program provides long-term services and supports, such as adult day care, transportation, chore services, respite care, and related supports to keep working caregivers employed	●	●	●

<b>Washington's Long-Term Care Trust Act<sup>36</sup></b>	Mandatory payroll premium housed in a state trust fund finances long-term services and supports. Qualifying individuals become eligible to receive benefits when they need assistance with three or more activities of daily living	●	●	●
	Trust fund covers \$36,500 (adjusted with inflation) in long-term care benefits per individual over the course of the beneficiary's lifetime			

PROPOSED FEDERAL POLICIES		ANALYSIS		
Policy Name & Date	Brief Description	Finances of caregiving	360° caregiver support	Caregiving and the workplace
<b>RAISE Family Caregiving Advisory Council (Implemented 2018; recommendations made, but not yet enacted)<sup>37</sup></b>	Finalized 26 recommendations aimed at establishing a national approach to addressing the needs of family caregivers of all ages and circumstance, which will be presented to Congress for consideration as a national strategy in 2021  These recommendations include reducing costs associated with care, expanding caregiver support tools, and encouraging adoption of flexible working arrangements	●	●	●
<b>S.740 - Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Act (Introduced March 2019)<sup>38</sup></b>	Amend Public Health Service Act to authorize grants for training and support services for families and caregivers of people living with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia	●	●	●
<b>H.R.2878 - Homecare for Seniors Act (Introduced May 2019)<sup>39</sup></b>	Amend Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow qualified distributions from health savings accounts for certain home care expenses	●	●	●
<b>S.1351 - Americans Giving Care to Elders (AGE) Act of 2019 (Introduced May 2019)<sup>40</sup></b>	Amend Internal Revenue Code to give qualified family caregivers a tax-credit (up to \$6,000 in a taxable year) to offset elder care expenses	●	●	●
<b>H.R.2730 and S.1443 - Credit for Caring Act (Introduced to both House and Senate May 2019)<sup>41</sup></b>	Amend Internal Revenue Code to provide a credit for working family caregivers for 30% of the cost of long-term care expenses, between \$2,000 to \$3,000 a year  Caregivers who provide care to dependent and have earned yearly income more than \$7,500 will be eligible	●	●	●
<b>S.3878 - Protecting Family Caregivers from Discrimination Act of 2020 (Introduced June 2020)<sup>42</sup></b>	Prohibit employers from firing, demoting, mistreating, refusing to hire, or taking other adverse employment action against workers who are caregivers for their loved ones	●	●	●
<b>S.248 - FAMILY Act (Introduced February 2019 (S.463); re-introduced February 2021)<sup>43</sup></b>	Create a permanent, national paid family and medical leave program. Ensure that every worker has access to paid medical leave when needed. Provides up to 66% of wage replacement for 12 weeks	●	●	●
<b>American Rescue Plan/ Stimulus Bill (Jan 20, 2021)<sup>44</sup></b>	Increase number of weeks available for unemployment benefits from 24 to 53  Expand the Child Tax Credit to allow families to claim up to \$3,600 for young children and \$3,000 for older children once a month  Offer tax credits to businesses to encourage offering paid sick leave to employees who are sick or caring for someone who is sick during the pandemic	●	●	●

<p><b>The American Jobs Plan (Introduced March 31, 2021; elder care services removed in negotiations of Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework; Biden plans to reintroduce in the future)<sup>45</sup></b></p>	<p>\$400 billion to home and community care services</p> <p>Expands access to quality, affordable home- or community-based care</p> <p>New jobs for caregiving professionals</p> <p>Incentives for caregiving professionals through raises, benefits, and unionization</p> <p>Expands access to home- and community-based services and extends Money Follows the Person innovation program</p> <p>\$40 billion to Dislocated Workers Program and sector-based training</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p>
<p><b>H.R.2999 - Direct CARE Opportunity Act (Introduced May 2021)<sup>46</sup></b></p>	<p>Provide funding (\$300 million each year for 5 years starting in 2022) to states and entities (including employers) to invest in strategies to recruit, retain, and advance the direct care workforce pipeline</p> <p>Implement strategies to make the field of direct care more attractive (i.e. training, apprenticeships, career pathways, mentoring, and innovation)</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p>

## Policy Analysis: Opportunities to Strengthen U.S. Caregiving Supports

Based on this analysis, we believe there are significant opportunities to sharpen caregiver support policies to meet caregivers' demonstrated needs. Insights include:

- **Moving from consensus to action.** Important caregiving legislation has already been introduced, but national political leaders must now build the consensus to ensure these proposals are actually enacted. Caregiving should be recognized as a nationwide, bipartisan priority, affecting families in every state and community.
- **The need for policy guidance to support working caregivers.** Of the analyzed policies, only four directly address the needs and challenges of working caregivers. Policymakers can enact proposals to support this vital population (e.g., expanded family care leave), as well as collaborate with employers to guide innovative workplace solutions.
- **Empowering caregivers with tools for saving and financial planning.** A number of policies address the financial levers of caregiving through stipends, tax credits, savings accounts, and streamlined access to care benefits. However, there is still an opportunity for additional policies that empower caregivers with tools and education to understand, plan, and save for care costs and financial needs overall.
- **Defining novel solutions for both child and elder care.** While there is growing policy attention to elder care, more progress is needed to ensure elder caregivers can access the same level of support, information, and resources as those who care for children. There may also be opportunities to address both types of needs at once, such as joint child/elder care facilities or services.

## A Global Perspective: Caregiver Support Policies Around the World

Policy examples from global leaders in caregiving support provide an important lens and potential models for how the U.S. can advance its public policies.

### France: A comprehensive approach to family caregivers' needs

In 2019, France launched a national strategy to support family caregivers' needs based on six pillars: end caregiver isolation, relieve administrative burdens on caregivers, ensure caregivers have security in employment and daily activities, expand options for respite care, address caregivers' health needs, and support student caregivers.<sup>47</sup> This strategy—backed by an initial 3-year budget of €400 million—brings a national approach that acknowledges caregivers' multi-faceted role and addresses the full range of their needs.<sup>48</sup>

The U.S. can enact comparable policy at the federal level. In particular, the RAISE Family Caregiving Advisory Council's 26 recommendations to form a U.S. national family caregiving strategy aim to shepherd government leadership through a cross-sector and collaborative effort.

### Canada: Paid leave benefits for all types of family caregivers

Canada offers paid leave benefits for all types of family caregivers, who can receive up to 55% of their regular earnings ranging across 15 to 35 weeks of leave.<sup>49</sup> By providing leave benefits for caregivers of children, older adults, and anyone at the end of life, Canada advances a 360° caregiving model, which also addresses financial burdens and workplace impacts.

This type of leave benefit, which governments and employers alike should evaluate, could reduce the strain on American family caregivers, allowing for higher quality caregiving and preventing workforce exits. However, the Canadian model also demonstrates shortcomings, as the duration of leave benefits varies based on the care recipient's age. To ensure equity of support, allotted leave time should be the same for all types of caregivers.

### Australia: Financial support to cover the costs of care

The Australian government provides a Carer Allowance to help family caregivers cover the costs of care, with equal benefits regardless of the age of the care recipient. Caregivers must meet certain qualifications, but the allowance is widely accessible and can be claimed multiple times for caregivers of multiple dependents.<sup>50</sup>

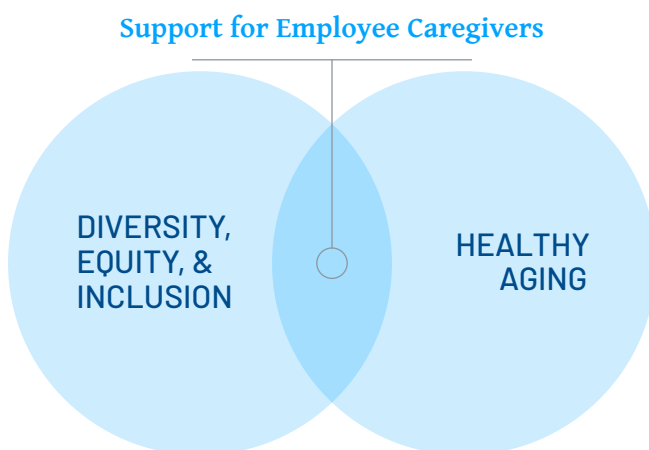
This kind of direct financial assistance can reduce one of the most prominent stressors on family caregivers. U.S. policymakers can adopt a similar approach with tax credits or stipends, and U.S. employers can offer benefits for caregivers, including tools to improve access to financial literacy, supported by government policies.

## Employer Best Practices to Support Caregiving Employees

Employers play a pivotal role, alongside policymakers, to support family caregivers. This is rising as a new imperative for businesses, sitting at the intersection of their commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies and healthy aging priorities. Employers can meet these commitments by creating and implementing comprehensive caregiver benefit programs, including paid time off for caregiving, legal support, professional eldercare assistance, care stipends, and employee support networks and counseling.<sup>51</sup>

- **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI):** Caregiving policies help to address the disproportionate burden of care on women, minority and lower-income families, and underserved communities—advancing employers’ commitments to equity in the workplace and across society.
- **Healthy Aging:** Caregiving support policies are the next logical step in helping to meet the growing demand among employees for comprehensive health and wellness benefits. These policies can be a central piece of comprehensive benefits that help employees plan for and meet their physical, mental, and financial health needs across the life course.

FIGURE 5:  
Caregiving Benefits Alignment with Corporate DEI and Healthy Aging Goals



“The data tell us that the unpaid caregiving work done by women in their households is, in fact, one of the biggest barriers they face to equal opportunity in the workforce. Post-pandemic, they risk falling even further behind.”

—Melinda Gates<sup>52</sup>

## Employer Best Practices

The following examples demonstrate how some employers are implementing best practices for the benefit of their employee-caregivers, which other businesses can model. These companies were first highlighted in the 2017 report *Supporting Working Caregivers: Case Studies of Promising Practices* published by AARP and Respect A Caregiver's Time (ReACT).<sup>53</sup>

### **Bank of America: Robust resources and flexibility options to support caregivers' wellness**

Bank of America provides a range of benefits to support employees with caregiving responsibilities; many of which have been expanded to reflect the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Employees can access enhanced back-up child and elder care services, as well as no-cost, 24/7 medical and behavioral telehealth consultations and home delivery of prescription medication. Bank of America also offers 26 weeks of parental leave and a number of other leave options, including personal and medical leave. Additionally, employee-caregivers and eligible household members can utilize free, unlimited, confidential counseling via phone and up to six free face-to-face counseling sessions. All of these benefits and policies aim to connect caregivers with the resources, flexibility and information that they need to stay physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially health.<sup>54</sup>

### **Caring.com: Supporting customers' and employees' elder care needs**

As an organization focused on eldercare, Caring.com strives for high-quality care for both its customers' and employees' loved ones. Caring.com offers a range of benefits to its employees with caregiving responsibilities and emphasizes open communication among colleagues and managers about these duties, experiences, and benefits.

Caring.com offers five days (40 hours) paid time off (PTO) specifically for caregiving, a benefit which has doubled in employee use in the past year. Caring.com also provides substantial PTO overall, with exempt employees receiving Flexible Time Off and non-exempt employees receiving generous PTO based on tenure. Through the 'Just Dream It' program, employees can submit 'dreams' that may be granted by a Caring committee throughout the year. Also through this program, employees can submit requests for monetary support, caregiving technology, more time off, relocation assistance, training courses, or Alzheimer's respite care.<sup>55</sup>

### **ViacomCBS: Caregiving benefits and utilization increasing to meet growing needs**

ViacomCBS provides a range of benefits and services to its employee-caregivers. Based on positive feedback and high utilization of benefits, ViacomCBS expanded its offerings in 2020. The company now offers six weeks full PTO for caregiving leave and 25 days of heavily subsidized backup care services. Additionally, ViacomCBS offers access to an eldercare management program through Bright Horizons, which includes a care coach, on-site free care assessments, legal help, financial guidance and referrals, and an online management platform. Lastly, ViacomCBS partners with CancerCare to provide



a range of services to employees affected by cancer, whether as patients, survivors, relatives, caregivers, or bereaved. The free services include case management assistance, psychosocial support, educational resources, and financial assistance.<sup>56</sup>

### **Emory University: A comprehensive suite of benefits that recognizes rising care challenges**

Emory's faculty and staff can access caregiving benefits through the Emory Caregiver Support Program (ECSP). Included in the ECSP are personalized care consultations, up to four hours of free professional elder care management services and a discounted rate past four hours, a 24/7 call center, monthly caregiver workshops, an online resource library, 10 days of discounted emergency backup care for adults, a dependent care flexible spending account to use on care services, and an onsite employee assistance program staffed with a range of mental and physical health specialists. Emory also allows employees to use their paid sick leave for caregiving purposes and offers a flexible working environment overall. Prior to the unique circumstances of the year 2020, Emory was making distinct efforts to expand employee knowledge of these services, which is demonstrated through a yearly increase in utilization rates.<sup>57</sup>

### **Fannie Mae: Going above and beyond to reduce employee stress**

Fannie Mae provides caregiving support that helps employees care for loved ones while minimizing impacts to their own well-being. Fannie Mae partners with Iona Senior Services to provide employees and their family members with access to a licensed social worker specializing in geriatrics – with no cost or limit. Employees can also access the Fannie Mae ElderKit and the new Emergency Info-to-Go tool, which provide resources to help plan for caregiving-related medical, financial, and legal needs. In 2020, Fannie Mae also doubled employees allotted paid Family Sick Leave from 5 to 10 days, in addition to other types of personal leave. Additionally, Dependent Care Assistance Program provides reimbursement for eldercare up to \$85 a day 45 days per year. Employees have reported “substantial improvements to quality of life for themselves and their loved ones thanks to these programs.”<sup>58</sup>

# Five Principles for Cross-Sector Caregiving Support

The analysis in this report leads to five principles for caregiver support policies. These principles are intended to motivate changes that both policymakers and employers can integrate into their policy design—advancing the kinds of solutions that will make a difference for families, communities, workplaces and across society.

**Principle #1:** Work should not inhibit high-quality care—and vice versa. Caregivers should be able to continue working, progressing in their careers, and contributing to the economy. To ensure the continued success of employee-caregivers, employers should implement comprehensive benefits programs.

**Policy considerations:**

- Protect family caregivers from discrimination in the workplace. Regardless of race, religion, gender, age, or caregiving status, employees should be supported and treated fairly in their workplace.
- Provide leave policies or guidance for employers that ensures working adults with an emergency illness or chronic disease, or caregivers supporting a loved one with these conditions, can take needed time for themselves and their loved ones.

**Employer considerations:**

- Provide leave policies that ensure working adults with an emergency illness or chronic disease, or caregivers supporting a loved one with these conditions, can take needed time for themselves and their loved ones.
- Conduct research to understand the specific needs of employee-caregivers and provide a suite of programs to meet those needs, recognizing each caregiver journey is unique. These could include providing greater flexibility, remote work options, access to support groups, educational resources, paid time off, legal support, stipends for short-term care support, assistance selecting care providers or facilities, or other forms of support.

**Principle #2:** Individuals and families should be able to support themselves financially through all levels of caregiving, both as caregivers and care recipients. They should have simple, affordable access to financial planning for retirement, caregiving, health-care, and other needs.

**Policy considerations:**

- Improve navigation for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—developing more streamlined access for both caregivers and care recipients.
- Create strong savings mechanisms to help people plan and save for their retirement, including potential healthcare and care needs.

**Employer considerations:**

- Ensure employees can easily enroll in and increase contributions to retirement accounts and healthcare savings accounts, as well as access dedicated guidance from financial experts.
- Develop mechanisms to help employees start financial planning even at early career stages both for current needs (childcare, elder caregiving) and future needs (personal care plans).
- Provide access to financial tools and financial services professionals who specifically address the finances of care.

**Principle #3:** All family caregivers should receive sufficient support, regardless of whether they care for children or older family members. Therefore, caregiving support policies should include childcare, elder care, “sandwich” care, and everything in between.

**Policy considerations:**

- Align elder care and childcare priorities, where possible, including strengthening long-term care services and offering tax credits to family caregivers. In particular, consider the multigenerational approach of joint childcare/elder care services.
- Strengthen resources and services for older adult caregivers through legislation.

**Employer considerations:**

- Offer a broad time-off package that includes vacation time, sick leave, and care leave, rather than separating these policies. This will enable caregivers of both children and older adults the flexibility to take time-off as needed.

**Principle #4:** Caregiver support policies should help caregivers and care recipients address COVID-19 and recover from the long-term impacts of the pandemic. This will speed the control of COVID-19 and the post-COVID economic and public health recovery.

**Policy considerations:**

- Develop safe, effective systems to ensure older adults get necessary care for COVID-19, including access to COVID-19 vaccines, appointment reminders, transport to medical locations, and home visits. Direct COVID-19 funds toward this support.
- Create a network of community health workers and other skilled caregivers to support older adults quarantining at home and connect them to necessary resources.
- Recognize the emotional and financial toll of caregiving during the pandemic, especially for the sandwich generation, and develop policies that help caregivers recover, avoid burnout, and/or return to the workforce.

**Employer considerations:**

- Provide employee-caregivers with resources on COVID-19 and vaccine education, including information about vaccination and test sites.
- Create internal support networks and peer groups for employee-caregivers.
- Continue to offer remote work options for all workers, even if the office is re-opened, to allow flexibility for caregivers.

**Principle #5:** Longevity Economics will be significantly improved by shining a spotlight on the value added through caregiving activities.

**Policy consideration:**

- Include caregiving policy as part of economic policy, understanding that family caregivers enable health systems, workplaces, and other critical parts of our national infrastructure to operate at their fullest potential.

**Employer considerations:**

- Recognize employee caregiving as a growing and undeniable trend and recognize employee-caregivers as valuable assets to the workplace. While these employees may require additional supports, when retained they will contribute to overall productivity and employer cost savings.
- Provide employees with opportunities for financial stability at all stages of life. Consider the various financial needs across the life course and offer benefits that help employees along this path.

# Conclusion

Family caregivers are indispensable to the future of the health system, workforce, economy, and communities. For our society to thrive in the years and decades ahead, we must assess, design, and bolster policies and benefits that match caregivers' evolving needs.

We are eager to engage with policymakers and employers to discuss these needs, strengthen existing and proposed responses, and inform comprehensive, well-designed supports for family caregivers. With collaboration and commitment, leaders in the U.S. can empower current and future family caregivers—laying the foundation for health, well-being, and productivity in this era of longer lives and growing care needs.

# Criteria for Public Policy Analysis

## Methodology to determine score

### 360° caregiver support:

- **Strong focus:** Directly supports caregiver through training, counseling, care planning; or, by providing care services or resources
- **Medium focus:** Indirectly supports caregiver by streamlining access to care services, strengthening care workforce, or providing financial benefits
- **No focus:** Does not address burden of providing care

### Caregiving and the workplace:

- **Strong focus:** Directly addresses professional impacts of caregiving with expanded leave, worker protections, or other workplace benefits
- **Medium focus:** Supports working caregivers through tax credits or other financial benefits
- **No focus:** Does not address workplace impacts of care

### Finances of caregiving:

- **Strong focus:** Directly addresses care costs with stipends, tax credits, benefits, etc. for caregivers
- **Medium focus:** Indirectly addresses care costs by paying for or providing care services; or streamlining access to those services
- **No focus:** Does not address costs of care

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## About GCOA

The Global Coalition on Aging aims to reshape how global leaders approach and prepare for the 21st century's profound shift in population aging. GCOA uniquely brings together global corporations across industry sectors with common strategic interests in aging populations, a comprehensive and systemic understanding of aging, and an optimistic view of its impact. Through research, public policy analysis, advocacy, and strategic communications, GCOA is advancing innovative solutions and working to ensure global aging is a path to health, productivity and economic growth.

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