State Opportunities to Support Family Caregivers

Family caregivers represent an overlooked — but vital — source of care for older adults. Approximately 34 million Americans provide unpaid care to an adult aged 50 and older. In 2013, unpaid caregivers provided $470 billion worth of care.

**Family Caregivers’ Roles Are Broad**

Providing care management, emotional support, and help with activities of daily living, such as:

- Mobility
- Hygiene
- Dressing
- Feeding

Managing medical and nursing tasks — for which they receive little or no training — such as:

- Medication management
- Urinary catheterization
- Tube feeding
- Wound care

**Family Caregivers Can Improve Health Care Quality & Reduce Costs**

Primary care providers have cited the benefits of working with family caregivers, reporting:

- Better patient outcomes
- Lower hospital readmission rates

Family caregivers help older adults remain at home and avoid the cost of hospitals and long-term care facilities:

- Nursing home care estimated annual cost:
  - $91K
- Home health aide estimated annual cost:
  - $46K

**Without Support, Caregiving Takes a Major Personal & Economic Toll**

- 6 in 10 family caregivers report cutting work hours, taking leaves of absence, or receiving performance warnings
- $300,000 estimated value of lost wages and benefits resulting from retiring early to become a family caregiver
- 20% physical and 40% emotional impacts from the stress of family caregiving on their physical and emotional health

**States Can Enact Policies to Increase Support for Family Caregivers**

- Create uniform policies across agencies to streamline caregiver information and access to services
- Inventory community services and caregiver resources
- Establish data sources to identify and track family caregivers, and assess their needs
- Provide trainings to family caregivers on key care topics
- Expand access to respite and adult day care services to reduce caregiver stress and prevent burnout
- Invest in programs that help keep family members in their homes for as long as possible

To learn more and view citation, visit [www.chcs.org/caregiving](http://www.chcs.org/caregiving)