STATE OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Family caregivers represent an overlooked — but vital — source of care for older adults. Approximately 40 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
- Approximate value of lost wages and benefits resulting from retiring early to become a family caregiver: $300,000
- Individuals who report negative impacts from the stress of family caregiving on their physical and emotional health:
  - 20% physical
  - 40% emotional

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

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