

Caregiver Education

Many caregivers are unaware of options, providers, and support services. Workplace education – often a brown-bag, lunch-hour program – is one simple, direct way to meet this need.

Seminars for employees held at your workplace can:

- ◆ Educate employees on this work/life issue
- ◆ Provide access to an expert in aging and caregiver services
- ◆ Build a personal library of caregiving resources and strategies for employees
- ◆ Defuse crises with heads-up options and strategies
- ◆ Help caregivers become more confident in problem-solving
- ◆ Show that you recognize work-life balance issues
- ◆ Show employees “they are not alone,” a stress reliever and teamwork opportunity within the workplace

Look up DARTS Workplace Eldercare Seminars on the web at www.darts1.org; or call 651-234-2231 for more information.

These seminars are supported by the MAAA (as part of the Older Americans Act) and the Greater Twin Cities United Way.

Expand Supportive Resources

Provide aging and caregiving resources (print, online, and on-site) useful to all employee groups, and frequently remind employees of existing policies and benefits.

Offer Workplace Flexibility

Research has found that employees with access to work schedule flexibility have significantly higher engagement and retention with lower burnout and stress. Flexible schedules and benefits are a low-cost strategy that works.

Consider: flexible hours; compressed work schedules; reduced hours; telecommuting; job-sharing; shift exchanges; phased-in retirement; employee leave-sharing; paid sick leave to care for family members or friends; and family leave without pay (FMLA).

Caregiver Education Web Resources for Employers

Eldercare Calculator

www.eldercarecalculator.org

MetLife Mature Market Institute

www.maturemarketinstitute.com

National Alliance for Caregiving

www.caregiving.org

DARTS Caregiver Education and Support

www.darts1.org • www.caregiverMN.org



FOOTNOTES

¹ Caregivers help their aging relative with chores and errands such as shopping, managing medications, paying bills, and cooking. As the relative grows more frail, the caregiver may also help with dressing, bathing, and eating.

² Society for Human Resource Management. 2003 Eldercare Survey. Alexandria, VA: Burke, E.M.

³ MetLife Mature Market Institute and National Alliance for Caregiving. The MetLife Caregiving Cost Study: Productivity Losses to U.S. Business. July, 2006.

Working Caregivers

AND AGING THE OF AMERICA...

| An Emerging Business Issue and How to Capitalize on It |

IN MOST WORKPLACES, 15 to 25 percent of all employees are involved in an extra part-time, nonpaying job – providing care to aging relatives. Workplaces with more older workers or more women may find the percentage twice as high.

Working caregivers¹ can devote 15 to 20 hours a week to caregiving, in addition to their normal work and family duties. Little time is left for relaxation, personal life, or work-life balance. Stress spills over onto workplace productivity.

The average age of these working caregivers – age 46 – corresponds with responsible roles at work and at home. Two-thirds report conflicts between work and caregiving responsibilities.

This brings the aging of America into the heart of the workplace.

COSTS TO EMPLOYERS

Productivity – Many caregiving activities can be handled only during the business day – emergencies, medical appointments, professional consultations, and problem solving. Effects on the workplace include:

- **Increased absenteeism**
- **Late arrivals**
- **Early departures**

Society for Human Resource Management Study on Eldercare Concerns (2003)

This study found that 47 percent of its professionals reported increases in number of employees working with eldercare issues.²

Respondents reported these negative effects on productivity:

44% Workday interruptions for eldercare issues

41% Difficulty concentrating

37% Extra personal phone calls or business conducted during work

Caregiving employees experience varying productivity. Presenteeism may apply – people are present in body but elsewhere in mind, working out urgent or intractable caregiving challenges.

MetLife reports nation-wide productivity losses due to eldercare issues of \$33.6 billion.³

COSTS TO EMPLOYERS

Recruitment and Retention –

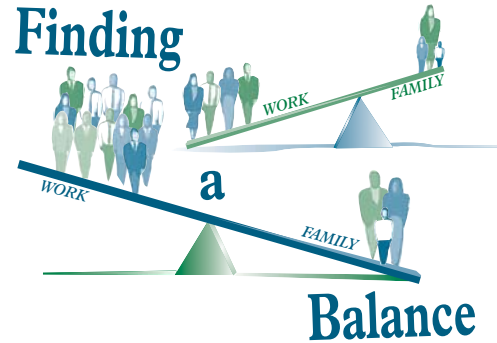
Loss of productivity may give way to attrition as caregivers are forced to cut back at work. Losing experienced employees at the peak of their careers adds to recruitment and retention costs.

Studies find caregivers may:

- ◆ Limit new opportunities at work, such as advanced training, travel projects, new or added work challenges, and promotions.
- ◆ Reduce the time committed to work:
 - ◆ **9 percent of working caregivers leave work** – 3 percent take early retirement, while 6 percent simply resign, as reported by MetLife.³
 - ◆ An additional **10 percent cut back** to part time.

Health Care –

Stress becomes a way of life for caregiving employees, eventually affecting their health. A MetLife Juggling Act Study reported that nearly 75 percent of caregivers report an impact on their health. Of these, nearly half report added visits to healthcare providers; half of those report eight or more additional visits per year.



A Bottom-Line Opportunity

Employers already support working caregivers indirectly. By addressing the bottom-line effects more constructively, employers can realize gains in

- Productivity
- Employee loyalty and responsiveness
- Recruiting advantage as a family-friendly employer.

Investment in family caregiving programs **does** make a difference.

A Ford Foundation report cites family-friendly policies and programs resulting in **less absenteeism and stress and higher morale.**

This study was based on 10 years' research at Boston University's Center on Work and Family.

A recent MetLife study reported **savings** of \$3 to \$5 for every \$1 spent helping employees find eldercare resources.

Analysis of family-friendly work programs at GMAC Mortgage found that the programs **improved profitability** with **decreased turnover, lateness, and unplanned absenteeism.** They also enhanced the company image, a recruitment advantage.

"...We accomplished a general feeling that we care about the employees' lives outside of work, too. Employees have info and resources to use..."

– Employer after Workplace Eldercare Seminar

Act Now

The numbers of employees handling family care responsibilities are growing and will continue to grow. The effects on the workplace will keep pace.

Assess the effects of eldercare on your employees in these easy, low-cost ways:

- Check demographics
- Calculate business costs
- Provide resources

Check your demographics

What percentage of your workers fall in the age group of 41 to 59 – common age of caregivers of elders?

Calculate the costs to your business at the web site, www.eldercarecalculator.org.

Host a presentation for employees on caregiving resources and options given by a local eldercare expert.

Ask for employee feedback on your efforts to support caregivers.

"Any funds spent by the employer in helping with caregiving have a payback to the employer of three to thirteen times the cost."

– Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Report