

CAREGIVERS

Understanding the Issue

Key statistics about family caregivers:

- There are an estimated 500,000 Nevadans providing approximately 400 million hours annually of unpaid care to help family, friends and neighbors live independently (AARP)
- Family caregivers provide the majority of unpaid care for their loved ones, at an estimated saving to Nevada taxpayers of \$400 billion per year (AARP)
- Up to 75% of caregivers are women; the majority are middle aged and employed outside of the home

Caregiving tasks:

- Personal care – Includes tasks such as meal preparation, bathing and managing incontinence
- Medications – Almost 50% of caregivers administer 5 to 9 prescriptions each day
- Complex medical tasks – Includes wound care, intravenous medications and injections
- Coordination of care and services – Managing medical care, transportation, home health, personal care, financial affairs and medical insurance

Impact on caregivers:

- Physical and emotional stress results in higher rates of depression, chronic illness and even death among caregivers
- 75% of caregivers are employed outside of the home. Businesses are impacted by lost productivity due to employees fulfilling caregiving responsibilities
- Financial stress includes ongoing out-of-pocket expenses and missed time in the workplace or resignation from a job in order to provide full time care
- Nursing home placement is often the only option when caregivers can no longer manage caring for a loved one at home. Annually, nursing home costs can range from \$72,000 - \$85,000 and are paid by families, insurance, Medicaid and other government programs. The impact on Medicaid is significant as older adults utilize over half of all dollars spent even though they are a small percentage of the total enrolled.

Unmet Needs

- Education and training – Family caregivers receive little or no training yet provide complex medical and nursing tasks for loved ones with chronic diseases and cognitive disorders, such as Alzheimer's
- Supportive services – Home and community-based services, such as adult day care, personal care, respite and case management help family caregivers manage caregiving tasks, reducing burden and stress. For the projected demands of the growing senior population in Nevada, there is already a shortage of affordable, quality community-based service providers.
- Respite – Defined as a break from the demands and responsibilities of caregiving

Current Request for Legislative Support

- The CARE Act (BDR 512) – The CARE Act will provide education and training so that caregivers can more safely help a loved one with medical needs. Key provisions include recording the name of the family caregiver upon admission to the hospital, notifying the caregiver of transfer or discharge and providing instructions for medical tasks to be performed at home.
- Increase Home and Community-Based Waiver and COPE Slots – These programs fund an array of home and community-based services to assist individuals, who qualify financially for Medicaid and are deemed at risk of nursing home placement, to remain in the community. Costs for these services are less than the costs for a nursing home placement. Additional slots are requested to provide services to those on current waiting lists and accommodate the increasing demand due to the growth in the aging population, especially in those 85 and older who are at greatest risk.