



Family Caregiving at a Glance

This fact sheet is intended to give staff a starting point to better understand the roles of family caregivers and outline actionable steps to improve their well-being.

By the year 2060, it is estimated nearly 1 in 4 Americans will be aged 65 and older.¹ For health centers, patients aged 65 and older are the fastest-growing age group over the past decade, experiencing a 120% growth.² As the United States ages, many families and friends will assume responsibility for providing informal and often unpaid support and care for aging family members. This approach to caregiving allows older adults to maintain their independence, continue aging in place, and often enhances their quality of life.³ The 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers (Administration for Community Living) offers a comprehensive framework for all stakeholders to align their efforts as they provide and improve their family caregiver services.³ Health centers have the opportunity to support this crucial role that allows their older patients with multiple care needs to continue safely living in their communities of choice.

What do caregivers provide?

- **Emotional Support** as a critical part of an older adult's social network
- **Physical Support** as they assist with activities of daily living, nutritional needs, and transportation
- **Medical Support** as they coordinate appointments and medication regimens
- **Financial Support** as they manage related costs for their care recipients

Caregiver roles can often change over time, depending on life transitions and disease trajectories.⁴ Despite the critical importance of their role, informal caregivers are often expected to perform tasks without adequate preparation or training. This can lead to caregiver burnout and poorer health outcomes for both the caregiver and the care recipient. Common stressors of caregiving include physical and emotional demands as well as limited time and finances, which all may increase experiences of social isolation and loneliness.³



How can health centers support caregivers?

1. Acknowledge caregivers as partners in care planning for older adults

- Recognize their essential role on the care team by proactively involving them in both short-term and long-term care decisions

2. Check in on caregiver physical and mental well-being

- Remember that the health of the caregiver can often determine the success of an older patient's care plan

3. Identify local and national resources focused on building skills and providing respite for caregivers

- Offer supportive referrals to an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and other community-based organizations that provide services like support groups, respite care, and educational opportunities to reduce caregiver burden and improve overall well-being

Resources

- Family Caregiver Services by State: Lists of available programs organized by location
- Family Caregiver Toolbox: Learning opportunities and support materials for caregivers
- Eldercare Locator: Database of state and local area agencies on aging and community-based organizations serving older adults and their caregivers

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