



Just the Facts:

Family Caregiver Support

What is the role of informal caregiving in providing long-term care to older adults?

Informal caregiving is when family and/or friends assist older adults with at least one of the activities essential for daily living. Unpaid, informal caregivers are the foundation of long-term care.

How much informal caregiving takes place?

More than 44.4 million Americans provide unpaid care to another adult. Nationwide, they provide approximately 80% of home care services. The value of this care exceeds \$257 billion a year nationally, with the value of care exceeding \$10.5 billion in Ohio alone. Ohio caregivers spend nearly 1.2 million hours a year helping older loved ones.

Who are Ohio's caregivers?

Ohio's average caregiver is female, age 46 with children living at home, and caring for her mother by providing some physical care and medication management. She is usually employed full-time but has made adjustments to her work schedule, or given up work entirely, and reports her employer is supportive to her caregiving role.

Who are the recipients of informal caregiving?

In Ohio, 32% of the older adults who receive care are between the ages of 50 and 74 and 43% are over the age of 75. The care recipient is likely to have more than two or more chronic illnesses which interfere with their ability to be independent.

How do informal caregivers assist older adults?

Caregivers help older adults with a wide range of tasks, including managing finances, shopping for groceries, cleaning, assisting in and out of bed, and helping with personal care activities like dressing, toileting, bathing, showering and eating.

What types of challenges do caregivers face?

Caregivers receive many rewards for their efforts, including the good feelings one gets from helping others. But caregivers also face new challenges and pressures. Unaddressed, caregiver stress can lead to mental and physical health problems and cause caregivers to become isolated. Quite often, as the older adult becomes more disabled, caregivers must increase the amount of assistance they provide. Caregivers may find it difficult to balance family, personal responsibilities and careers with their caregiving role. Giving families a break from their caregiving duties is key to their ability to provide care, avoiding more costly institutional long-term care.

What types of supports are available to caregivers?

The Family Caregiver Support Program helps individuals rise to the challenges of informal caregiving. Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging help caregivers access information, connect them with needed community services, provide individual counseling, facilitate support groups and caregiver training, organize respite care for temporary relief from caregiving responsibilities and more.

How can caregivers access support services?

Families can contact their local Area Agency on Aging for information and referrals to programs and services that support caregivers. Contact information for each of Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging Family Caregiver Support Programs is available at www.ohioaging.org.

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