

## Family Caregiving Fact Sheet

*Caregivers are: wives, husbands, parents, children, friends, employees...  
If you provide physical or financial support, transportation or  
assistance by telephone... YOU ARE a Caregiver.*

### Did you know that ...

- American families, organized as households, provide 80 to 90 percent of the medical and personal care required by our frail elderly.
- Nearly one in four households in America are involved in providing physical and emotional assistance to older relatives and friends.
- The number of households providing caregiving has tripled in the last decade.
- 37 percent of Kent County residents surveyed are providing care to elderly relatives or friends.
- 39 percent of people 60 and older, surveyed in Kent County, are providing some type of care.
- About 75 percent of all caregivers for older people are women.
- Family caregiving differs across racial and ethnic groups.
- Some 25 percent of all persons in the paid labor force provide care for their elderly relatives.
- Just over half of all caregivers for persons aged 50 and older are employed full-time and almost two-thirds are employed full- or part-time.
- Transportation, grocery shopping, and household chores are the most common tasks of caregivers.
- While the average caregiver provides about 18 hours of care per week, intense caregiving is going on in a quarter of the 22.4 million households providing care. Some 4.1 million households are providing at least 40 hours

per week of unpaid, informal family assistance, and some 1.6 million households and providing 20-40 hours per week.

- The majority of caregivers provide unpaid assistance for one to four years. Some 20 percent provide care for five years or longer.
- Research has shown that spouses who experience mental or emotional strain in their caregiving have a 63 percent higher risk of dying than non-caregivers.
- Contrary to popular belief, only about 10 percent to 20 percent of family caregivers use formal services offered by public or private agencies.
- Almost all (96 percent) of caregiving women have experienced some conflict among the major roles so many contemporary women fill – caregiver, mother, wife, and employee.
- The women who experience the most parent care conflict with their other roles in life tend to have more physically and mentally impaired parents.
- Caregiving can be an emotional roller coaster. Caring for loved ones can demonstrate the caregiver’s love and commitment. But it can also lead to burn out, stress and depression due to exhaustion, inadequate help and support, and unending responsibilities.
- Nearly one-third of all adult children caregivers show signs of clinical depression after one year of caregiving.

## **References**

- Albert, S. M., “The Dependent Elderly, Home Health Care and Strategies of Household Adaptation.” In Aging and Everyday Life, Blackwell Publications, Malden, Massachusetts, 2000, pp. 373-385.
- National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. Family Caregiving in the U.S.: Findings From a National Survey, National Alliance for Caregiving, Bethesda, MD and AARP, Washington, D.C., June, 1997.
- Health and Human Services. Informal Caregiving: Compassion in Action. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. Based on data from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), June, 1998.

- AARP. In the Middle: A Report on Multicultural Boomers Coping with Family Aging Issues. AARP, Washington, D.C., July 2001.
- Bond, J.T., Galinsky, E. and Swanberg, J.E. The 1997 National Study of the Caregiving Workforce. Families and Work Institute, New York, NY, 1998.
- Stone, R. Cafferata, G.L., and Sangl, J. “Caregivers of the Frail Elderly”: A National Profile. The Gerontologist, Vol. 27, No. 5, pp. 616-626, 1987.
- Schulz, R. and Beach, S.R. “Caregiving as a Risk Factor for Mortality: The Caregiver Health Effects Study,” JAMA, Vol. 282, No. 23, pp. 2215-2219, December 1999.
- Brody, E.M. Women in the Middle: Their Parent Care Years. Springer Publishing Co., New York, N.Y., 1990.
- Stephens, M.A.P., Townsend, A.L., Martine, L.M., and Druley, J.A. “Balancing Parent Care with Other Roles: Interrole Conflict of Adult Daughter Caregivers.” In Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences, Vol. 56B, No. 1, January 2001, pp. 24-34.
- Family Circle and Kaizer Foundation. The Family Circle/Kaizer Family Foundation National Survey on Health Care and Other Elder Care Issues: Summary of Findings and Chart Pack. The Henry J. Kaizer Family Foundation, Menlo Park, CA, September 2000.
- Toseland, R.W., Smith, G.C., and McCallion, P. “Supporting the Family in Elder Care.” In Strengthening Aging Families: Diversity in Practice and Policy. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1995, pp. 3-24.
- Delta Strategy. “Kent County Survey Statistics.” Grand Rapids, MI, 2001.

This Fact Sheet is provided as a public service of the Caregiver Resource Network. The Caregiver Resource Network is a collaboration of Kent County organizations dedicated to providing for the needs and welfare of family and professional caregivers within the community. Funded by the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan with Older American’s Act Title III-E, Family Caregiver Support Funds.

Revised 2/13/03

[www.caregiverresource.net](http://www.caregiverresource.net) or call 616-456-5664