

Employer Support for Care Giving Employees

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“There are only four kinds of people in this world. Those who have been caregivers, those who are caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.” *Rosalynn Carter, Former First Lady*

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that in the year 2010, 54% of workforce employees will provide eldercare for a parent or parents and that nearly two-thirds of caregivers will experience conflict between demands at home and demands from employers.

Today's employed adult children are the caregiver generation for their parents. They are finding themselves juggling care responsibilities around their employment obligations. Sometimes employees find they have no option but to take leave from work or use sick time to meet their care giving demands.

Employers also feel the toll it is taking on their employees. A [report](#) by the AARP

describes the cost to employers:

“Companies are also seeing the emotional and physical toll that care giving takes on their workers. In one study, 75 percent of employees caring for adults reported negative health consequences, including depression, stress, panic attacks, headaches, loss of energy and sleep, weight loss, and physical pain. Businesses suffer, too, by having to pay high health insurance costs and in lost productivity. That doesn't count the promotions or assignments workers turn down that require travel or relocation away from aging relatives.”

Historically, human resource departments work with employees on many issues that may affect their work productivity. There are programs for drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, illness, absenteeism and childcare; eldercare issues are only recently being included.

A growing number of companies nationwide are directing their HR departments to provide resources; education and group help for care giving issues by:

Providing materials from community resources such as phone numbers to their local Senior Centers or Area Agencies on Aging.

Making available brochures and booklets on specific programs and services by eldercare experts

Providing speakers to educate employees on care giving options

Allowing options to use paid sick leave, employee job sharing and flexible hours

Contracting with companies who provide eldercare services to help employees

Eldercare service providers are also reaching out to help employee caregivers by providing informational presentations at the work place during lunchtime or other times set up by employers. In the past, Elder Life Management has provided many seminars and “lunch and learn” programs to larger companies in the Monmouth County area.

With increased information, employers, employees and eldercare service providers working together can make elder care responsibilities become more manageable.

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