CareScout®

The hidden second job

Every day, millions of employees arrive at work carrying responsibilities that extend far beyond their jobs. Before logging in, attending meetings, or serving customers, many have already coordinated doctor appointments, managed medications, helped a parent get dressed, or handled a healthcare crisis.

These employees are family caregivers, and they represent a significant portion of today's workforce. In 2015, there were **35 million** American adults providing ongoing care to adults or children with a medical condition or disability. In 2025, that number jumped to 63 million – a **45% increase** in 10 years.

For employers, caregiving is no longer affecting only a small segment of the workforce. It is a workforce issue that impacts productivity, engagement, absenteeism, retention, and employee well-being.

In 2025, **63 million** American adults provided ongoing care to adults or children with a medical condition or disability.

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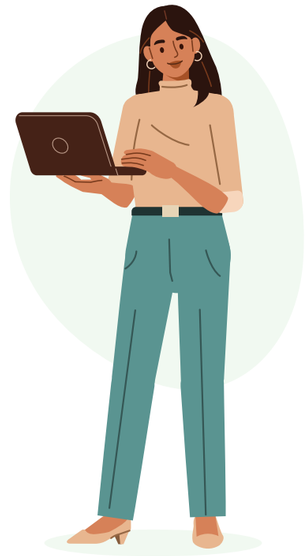
The effect on the workplace

Caregiving rarely follows a predictable schedule. It often requires employees to complete caregiving tasks during the traditional workday, creating ongoing conflicts between work responsibilities and caregiving demands.



Many caregiving employees are experienced, tenured workers with valuable institutional knowledge and leadership skills. Losing them because they cannot successfully balance work and caregiving obligations can be both costly and disruptive.

By understanding the realities caregivers face and implementing supportive workplace practices, employers can help employees navigate one of life's most challenging responsibilities while remaining productive, engaged, and successful at work.

What employee caregivers manage

- Medical appointments and provider calls
- Medication, treatment, and daily care needs
- Transportation, finances, and household tasks
- Care decisions and family coordination

How this shows up at work

- Late arrivals, early departures, or absences
- Interrupted focus and competing priorities
- Stress, fatigue, and feelings of isolation
- Financial pressure and concern about job security

78%

Of employees say balancing work and caregiving affects stress levels at work.*

The employer opportunity

Employers are looking for ways to keep employees connected to their jobs. You can help employers build a supportive workplace and it doesn't require employers to solve every caregiving challenge. It starts with helping them reduce avoidable friction, make resources easier to use, offer caregiver-friendly benefits, and create a culture where employees can ask for help before they reach a crisis point.

1. **Offer flexibility where the role allows**
Flexible schedules, remote or hybrid arrangements, shift adjustments, and predictable scheduling can help employees manage appointments and urgent care needs. Caregivers identify flexible hours and telework as helpful supports.

2. **Build an inclusive caregiver culture**
51% of working caregivers haven't told their supervisor that they are caregivers. Use inclusive language, communicate resources regularly, and avoid assumptions about who provides care.

1 in 2

working caregivers report arriving late, leaving early, or taking time off.

3. **Offer caregiver-friendly benefits and connect employees with resources**
Make caregiver navigation, employee assistance programs, counseling, referrals, education, and planning tools available and easy to find. Research shows access to these supports is lower for hourly employees than for salaried employees. Explain how paid family leave, sick leave, PTO, and other available programs may apply to caregiving. Provide simple guidance on eligibility, requests, and where employees can get confidential help.

4. **Equip managers to support employee caregivers**
Managers should not be expected to diagnose or personally solve an employee's care situation. However, provide them training on how to listen without judgment, protect privacy, discuss available work options, and direct employees to benefits and resources. Keep support consistent across employee job level.

5. **Provide equitable support**
Salaried caregivers report greater access than hourly caregivers to telecommuting, paid family leave, paid sick leave, and information, referral, counseling, or employee assistance resources. Reviewing eligibility, communications, and manager practices can help employers identify where support may be harder to access.

For employers, caregiving is not only a personal concern. It is a workforce reality that can affect employees' ability to remain productive and employed.

Interested in learning more about solutions for the workplace?

Contact us:

Phone:
Visit our website:

All statistics, except where identified with a *, were sourced from Caregiving in the US (July 2025). An AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving report sponsored by CareScout.
* 2025 Future of Benefits Report, April 2025 (Accessed March 6, 2026).

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