



Survey Results: Caregiver Burnout and What It Means For Senior Living

By Michelle Seitzer

The newest [Family Caregiver Journey survey](#) — Caring.com's annual measure of how caregivers of older adults in the US are faring financially (Caring.com is a Senior Housing Forum partner) — was just released, and with National Family Caregivers Month ahead of us, the findings of the 2017 survey put current caregivers' monetary sacrifices in the spotlight:

- 44% of family caregivers spend \$5,000 a year or more on caregiving expenses
- 25% of family caregivers spend \$10,000 a year or more on caregiving expenses
- Caregivers of persons with dementia spend \$50,000 a year or more on caregiving expenses

Where Are They Spending?

So if these older adults are not yet residing in senior living or receiving care at home from a paid provider, where is the money going? The answer may surprise you: it's food and clothing, which accounts for 58% of the annual out-of-pocket caregiving costs sustained by family caregivers each year. In a close second at 56% is transportation, followed by medications/medical costs (42%), traveling to care for a loved one (29%), and legal services (23%).

Working Full-Time . . . for Free

Besides the financial output, the sacrifices of time are comparable to a full-time job — but without a paycheck. Nearly 40% of survey respondents provide care for a loved one for more than 30 hours per week. And while there are government programs that can pay caregivers for their time, the survey revealed that 90% of respondents do not receive compensation for their caregiving work, instead relying on Medicare and family funds.

These people are not stay-at-home caregivers either: more than a third (33%) of today's family caregivers juggle a full- or part-time job with their care duties. Admittedly, the juggling act isn't easy: as 68% of respondents stated caregiving had a strong, and in some cases, negative, impact on their work — specifically, 79% of them having to miss time, and 13% saying they had to leave their (paid) positions.

What Does the Future Hold?

The present is hard enough for the majority of family caregivers in the US today. But the future? Given all that they are spending — in dollars, hours, and emotions — caregivers are not particularly optimistic about what is to come. According to the survey:

- 90% are concerned about affordable healthcare for their loved ones in the future
- 44% are extremely concerned
- 26% are very concerned
- 10% are not concerned at all

Make Plans for Caregiving

Rosalynn Carter believes we all fall into the caregiving category at some point in our lives: we've either been caregivers, are now caregivers, will soon be caregivers, or will need caregivers. Some of us spend time in all four categories.

During National Family Caregivers Month, we focus on these special people: their challenges, their sacrifices, their joys. But every day, caregivers are all around you. They live next door — or in your own home. They're residing in your senior living communities — and may even be caring for a spouse there now. Maybe they cared for a special needs child into adulthood before they moved to your community.

Before and after November, senior living leaders have the unique opportunity and responsibility to encourage residents, staff, and family members at any stage of the caregiver journey to make a caregiving plan. "Without a plan in place, savings can be depleted and retirement delayed," says Tim Sullivan, Vice President at Caring.com. "It's so important to make the time to speak with your loved ones about finances, eldercare and planning for the future," Sullivan added.

[Read more of the 2017 Caregiver Journey Survey, including charts and infographics, here.](#)

Methodology

Caring.com's yearly Family Caregiver Journey survey measures how family caregivers of older adults living in the U.S. hold up financially as they care for elder loved ones. From August 29 – September 17, 2017, Pretell Market Research conducted an online survey among Caring.com users, and received responses from 2,767 family caregivers. No incentive was offered.



This article has been brought to you by [Caring.com](#) in partnership with [Senior Housing Forum](#).

