



Caring for America's Seniors:

The Value of Home Care



Home Care
Association of America



Global Coalition on Aging

America's population is aging rapidly.

By 2020, 56 million Americans will be 65 and older; by 2050, that number will reach 84 million.¹ And, the oldest-old population—Americans over 85—is on pace to triple by 2040.² Nearly 70 percent of Americans who reach 65 will be unable to care for themselves at some point without assistance.³



The question is:

Who is going to provide that care?

While there's no silver bullet to the challenges that accompany population aging, home care, privately paid for by the care recipient, is emerging as a valuable and vital part of the solution.

Home care is a relatively young industry—not even a half century old. It was created as an innovative

solution to the fast-growing care needs of an increasingly elderly population. It provides seniors a choice about how and where they age and delivers peace of mind to family members who are unable, for a variety of reasons, to provide all the care their elderly loved ones need.

The simple fact is,

traditional government health care programs and our current system of institutional care cannot meet the needs of the tens of millions of elderly Americans who will require some form of assistance. Private-pay home care fills a critical gap for seniors between hospital stays, nursing home care, and care provided by family members and loved ones.

9/10



WANT TO STAY AT HOME

Meeting the Desires of Seniors

Nine out of ten Americans 65 and older want to stay at home for as long as possible, and 80 percent think their current home is where they will always live.⁴



HOME CARE FILLS
NECESSARY GAPS

Filling Gaps in Existing Care

Home care complements existing health care services, alleviating pressure on the overall system, allowing more traditional models of care to work and do what they do best.

\$25B

SAVINGS IN
HOSPITAL COSTS

Reducing Health Care Costs

Elderly Americans receiving home care generally need fewer trips to doctors and hospitals. As a result, home care reduces overall health care costs, while also creating jobs in a new and growing sector. The U.S. saved as much as \$25 billion in hospital costs in 2008 alone due to the growth of home care services over the previous decade.⁵

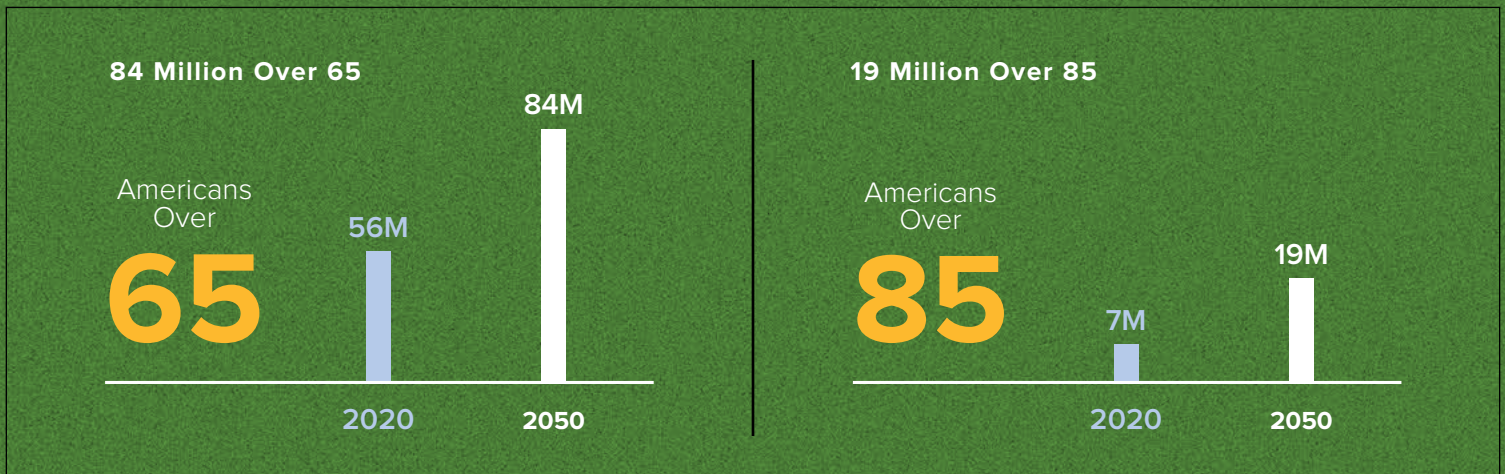
Home care professionals—also known as caregivers—work with family members, community agencies, and medically trained professionals

like doctors and nurses to broaden the scope of care for seniors and provide better health outcomes. They are trained care providers who help families deal with the daily challenges of aging and provide the support necessary to allow elderly Americans to remain independent for as long as possible—exactly what seniors and their families want most.

America's Aging Population Means Millions of Elderly Will Need Care

The demographic phenomenon of America's aging population—an unalterable product of increased longevity and declining birth rates—is dramatically reshaping our society. Consider these facts:

GROWING AMERICAN AGING POPULATION



- **The Changing Age of America:**

In the U.S., there are already more people over 60 than under 15.⁶ By 2030, the 65 and over population will represent 20 percent of the total population, up from 13 percent in 2010.⁷

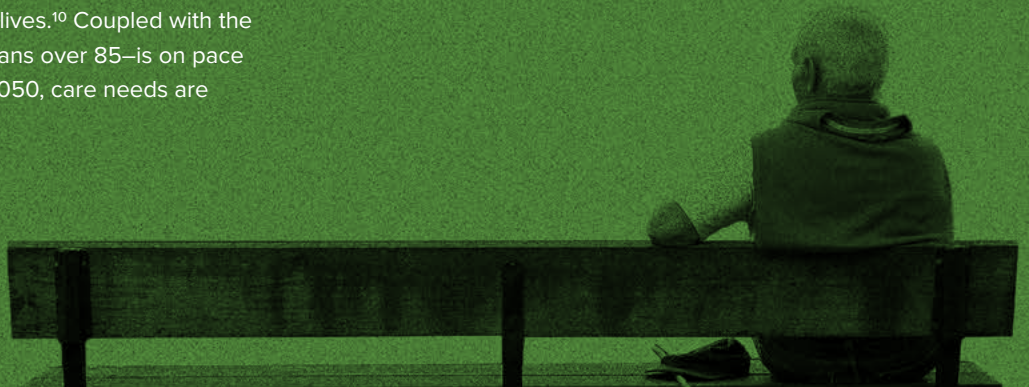
- **84 Million Seniors by 2050:**

By 2020, 56 million Americans will be 65 and older; by 2050, that figure will reach nearly 84 million.⁸

- **Most Will Require Care:**

Already 40 percent of adults aged 65+ need assistance with daily living activities.⁹ Nearly 70 percent of all Americans 65 and older will need assistance at some point in their lives.¹⁰ Coupled with the fact that the oldest-old population—Americans over 85—is on pace to triple by 2040 and reach 19 million by 2050, care needs are rapidly on the rise.¹¹

These figures paint a picture of a society shifting from one dominated by youth to one characterized by more old than young. This demographic revolution brings new challenges, including the prospect of providing care to tens of millions of elderly Americans who will need a full spectrum of assistance choices during their extended lives.

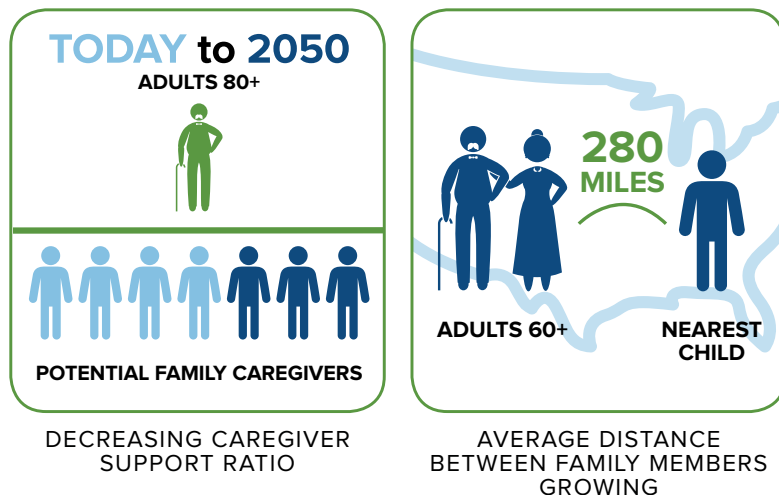


Gaps Already Emerging in America's Care Continuum

Just a few decades ago, care for seniors was reserved for hospitals and nursing homes—and Medicare was healthy enough to cover these care needs of older Americans. As more and more people are living into their 70s, 80s, 90s and beyond, America needs to broaden its definition of the continuum of care.

Millions of Americans need assistance with day-to-day tasks that do not require a move to a nursing home or hospital. **In fact, for many seniors, a few hours of assistance per day can actually prevent a trip to the hospital or keep them out of nursing homes.**

Traditionally, when additional help was needed, children and family members stepped in to care for aging loved ones. Yet significant gaps have emerged with this model. As America's overall population ages, the total population of potential family caregivers is shrinking.



- **Fewer Family Caregivers to Provide Assistance:**

AARP estimates that the ratio of potential family caregivers to those over 80 will decrease from 7:1 today to 4:1 by 2030, and to less than 3:1 by 2050.¹²

- **A Shrinking Base of Support:**

Between 2000 and 2030, the proportion of those over 65 compared to the working age population will nearly double, from 20 percent to 38 percent, meaning the total population of possible caregivers is shrinking.¹³

- **Growing Distance Between Family Members:**

America's mobile society means more and more family members are living farther and farther away from each other. On average, adults aged 60+ with one or more adult children live more than 280 miles from their nearest child.¹⁴

All of these factors contribute to the widening gap in America's health care continuum.

“The home care industry helps seniors to live with dignity and self-respect, and to feel like an integral part of the society and world in which they live.”

Caregiver, Chicago

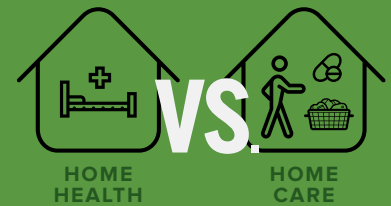
What Is Home Care?

Private-pay home care has emerged as an innovative solution to fill the gaps created by traditional care models, including hospitals, nursing homes, and social services like home health, which are spread too thin to meet the growing demand for quality care.

Home care helps seniors maintain healthy and active lifestyles for as long as possible in the comfort of their own homes. While caregivers are not typically medically certified, they receive professional training to enable them to assist in daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, meal preparation, eating, transportation, running errands, and light housework.

More importantly, caregivers provide companionship and mental stimulation by engaging their clients in conversation and other activities. Further, as an additional set of “eyes and ears” for families, home care professionals help to ensure seniors’ safety by recognizing and alerting their family members to potential signs of declining health and dangerous falls.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOME CARE AND HOME HEALTH



It is important not to confuse home care with home health. Home health is medically necessary and doctor-prescribed care that is performed by a combination of medical professionals, such as a physical therapist, occupational therapist, social worker, registered nurse, or home health aide. They provide health services such as administering medications, changing wound dressings or helping with prescribed exercises.¹⁵

HOME HEALTH: PRIMARILY GOVERNMENT-FUNDED CARE

\$44.3B 

Sources of financing for the two services also differ. The overwhelming majority of funding for the home health industry—73 percent or \$44.3 billion—comes from government programs, primarily Medicaid and Medicare.¹⁶

HOME CARE: PRIMARILY FAMILY-FUNDED CARE



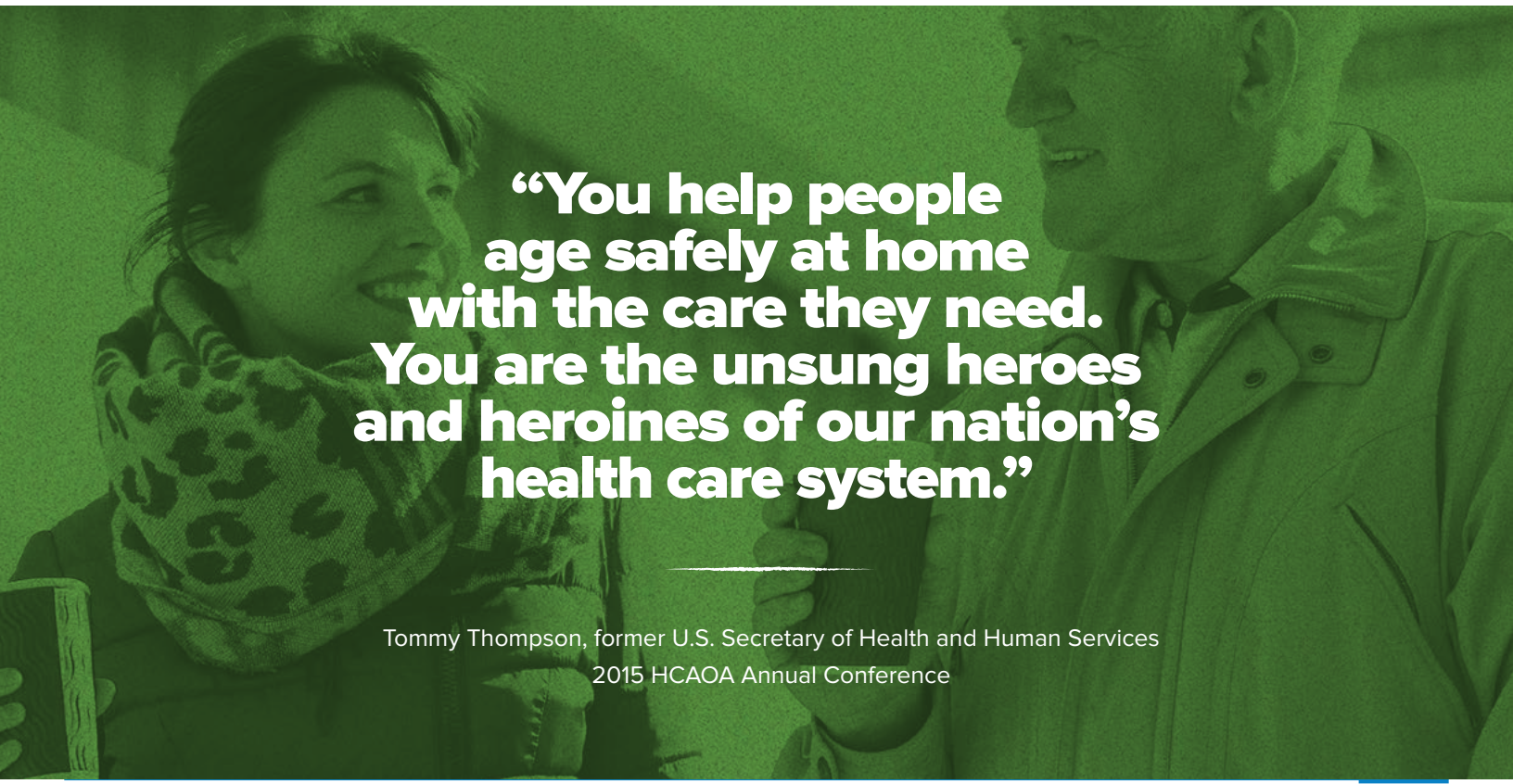
The majority of home care services are privately paid for by the families or seniors benefiting from the care.

Who Uses Home Care Services?

The majority of home care recipients are seniors with an average age of 69. Three-in-five care recipients (59%) have long-term physical conditions and a quarter (26%) have memory problems. Many care recipients (37%) have more than one ongoing health problem.¹⁷

For seniors with challenging physical and cognitive impairments who require help with activities of daily living—such as bathing, dressing, toileting, and eating—home care is a game changer. But home care also benefits those who are still in good health, by providing companionship, help in and around the home, and other types of assistance.

Further, families as well as seniors benefit from the services provided by home care companies, which will be described in more detail throughout this report. Currently, 13.9 million family caregivers (32%) report using paid help.¹⁸



“You help people age safely at home with the care they need. You are the unsung heroes and heroines of our nation’s health care system.”

Tommy Thompson, former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services
2015 HCAOA Annual Conference

Services Provided by Home Care Companies



Companionship: from socializing to providing transportation to activities



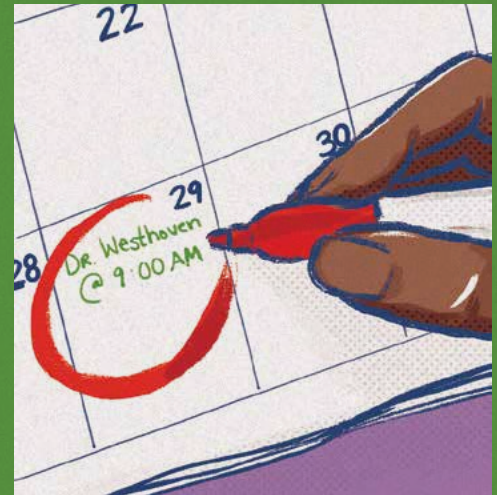
Wellness and safety: including meal preparation, diet and nutrition, personal safety monitoring



Help in and around the home: including grocery shopping, running errands, laundry, light housekeeping



Activities of daily living: assistance with bathing, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene, mobility



Care coordination: accompanying seniors to doctor visits, serving as an extra set of "eyes and ears" for families



Management of chronic conditions: medication reminders, daily health monitoring and regular reporting of any changes



Transitional care: from hospital discharge to home

A blue-tinted photograph showing several hands of different ages working together to assemble puzzle pieces. The hands are positioned over a surface covered with many puzzle pieces, some of which are already connected. The lighting is soft, and the overall tone is collaborative and focused.

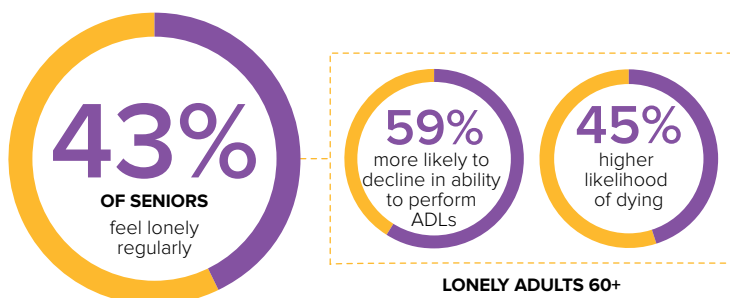
Home Care Benefits

Home care provides seniors with the choice to age at home—where most would prefer to be—and promotes peace of mind and wellness for family caregivers. It also reduces our nation's health system costs by improving health outcomes, strengthening preventive care, and lowering hospital admissions and readmissions. And home care is good for our nation's economy, creating jobs in a fast-growing industry.

Keeping Seniors Safe, Healthy, Engaged, and Active

Professional caregivers enable seniors to enjoy independent living longer. They provide a range of services that benefit seniors by keeping them safe, healthy, engaged, and active.

Social Isolation of Seniors

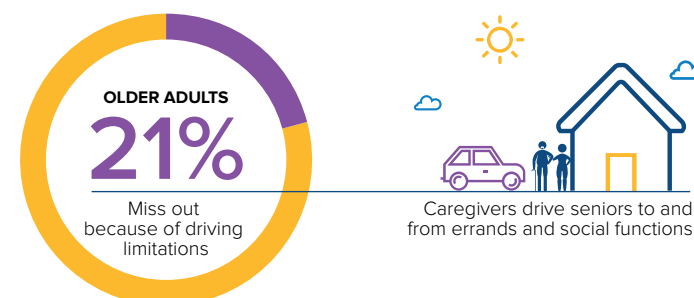


• **Preventing Falls and Other Common Injuries:** Falls are the number one cause of emergency room visits and the leading cause of injury deaths among seniors age 65 and older.¹⁹ People over 65 are twice as likely to suffer a fatal fall at home as anywhere else.²⁰ Falls can easily happen while attempting simple household tasks such as carrying laundry down the basement stairs or reaching for an upper shelf to put away a dish. Caregivers complete these and many other everyday tasks, helping prevent accidents that could otherwise potentially lead to serious injury requiring months of rehabilitative care or even death.

• **Keeping Seniors Healthy:** Caregivers help seniors stay healthy by ensuring medication regimes are followed—a crucial job considering 40-75 percent of older people reportedly make some kind of error when taking their medications.²¹ Caregivers also help seniors stay healthy by preparing nutritious meals and helping seniors maintain a healthy, balanced diet.

• **Providing Companionship and Personalized Care:** A caregiver's companionship impacts not only physical wellbeing, but emotional health as well. Social isolation is a major problem among aging Americans; 43 percent of seniors report feeling lonely on a regular basis.²² Senior loneliness is more than just a social problem; it is a serious public health issue. One study found that adults age 60+ who identified themselves as lonely were 59 percent more likely to suffer a decline in ability to perform daily

Helping Seniors Stay Engaged



activities and had a 45 percent higher likelihood of dying than those satisfied with their social lives.²³ Companionship helps deter diseases such as Alzheimer's by keeping seniors mentally stimulated. A study published in the Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry found that older adults who described themselves as lonely were twice as likely to develop dementia.²⁴

• **Helping Seniors Remain Engaged and Connected:** Home care is an empowering option for millions of elderly Americans longing to age at home. Transportation is a major problem for many active seniors trying to age at home. A Harvard University study found that 21 percent of older adults miss out on activities they like to do because of driving limitations.²⁵ Professional caregivers can step in and help these seniors age at home by driving seniors to run errands or attend social functions.

A caregiver's care routine includes much more than cooking and cleaning. Caregivers discuss current events, listen to stories, play games, share meals, and provide companionship in many other ways. These professionals' interests are matched carefully with those of their clients to help ensure compatibility and a stronger likelihood of forming close relationships.

Helping Seniors Age the Way They Want—at Home

Perhaps the greatest value that home care provides to individuals is choice: the choice to maintain dignity and independence—the choice to live at home.

- Ninety percent of Americans 65 and older want to stay at home for as long as possible, and 80 percent think their current home is where they will always live.²⁶
- A recent study shows that 60 percent of households aged 80 and older and 47 percent of those aged 65-79 had lived in the same residence for 20 years or more.²⁷

The sense of familiarity and community that comes from living at home is equally important to seniors—the joy that comes from being around neighborhood friends, the reassurance of

shopping at a favorite grocery store, the comfort derived from attending local religious services, and the pride that comes from remaining independent.

Over 80 percent of Americans in their early 70s own their home.²⁸ Many worked hard for years to achieve the American dream, and their home embodies that accomplishment. Home care provides the choice and enables the desire to stay at home.

EMPLOYER-BASED HOME CARE VS. REGISTRIES



EMPLOYER-BASED

The employer-based model means that the home care company employs its caregivers directly, offering security and benefits for workers and peace of mind for clients. All members of the Home Care Association of America adhere to the employer-based model.

VS.



REGISTRIES

Registry models typically engage caregivers as independent contractors, which may result in the consumer becoming the caregiver's employer. In this case, the senior/family would be responsible for employer-related liabilities, such as payroll taxes and workers' compensation, which usually go hand-in-hand with this kind of relationship.

EMPLOYER-BASED HOME CARE: ENSURING QUALITY, SAFETY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

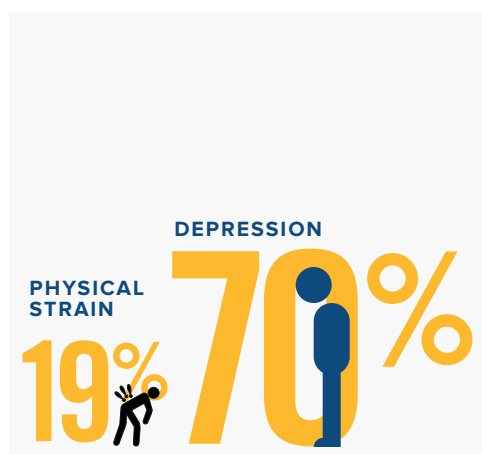
Thousands of home care providers are based on an employer model, meaning they directly employ caregivers, and clients work directly with the company instead of through a referral agency or with a privately retained individual caregiver. In this latter situation, the care recipient or family may become the caregiver's employer—therefore assuming all the responsibilities of an employer.

Home care companies give their clients security and peace of mind by conducting background checks on all employees, and they ensure their caregiver employees are fully trained and supervised. An employer-based home care agency also provides a dependable, reliable supply of caregivers for families. Home care companies additionally are required to comply with all applicable licensing and labor laws. These companies can help to alleviate some of the common difficulties associated with directly hiring a caregiver by matching caregiver qualifications to the client's needs; carrying insurance and workers' compensation; and paying employee wages and taxes.

This model also benefits home care workers by providing them training, professional development programs, access to new technology, and administrative support. Given the high levels of screening, training, and supervision, the employer model is best equipped to support caregivers as this occupation grows across the U.S.

Improving Health and Bringing Peace of Mind to Over-Burdened Families

More than 34.2 million Americans serve as family caregivers for someone age 50 and over.²⁹ On average, family caregivers spend 24.4 hours per week providing care.³⁰ The impact of the caregiving responsibilities on families is profound.



• A Greater Physical and Emotional

Toll: The stress of caregiving takes a toll on physical and emotional wellbeing; 19 percent of family caregivers report a high level of physical strain³¹ and up to 70 percent report symptoms of depression.³²

60%
WORK



61%
MAKE WORKPLACE
ACCOMMODATION



• A More Challenging Work-Life-Care

Balance: About 60 percent of family caregivers also work.³³ The intensity of caregiving forces 61 percent of working family caregivers to make a workplace accommodation, including going in late, leaving early, taking time off, cutting back on working hours, taking a leave of absence, turning down a promotion, retiring early, or losing job benefits.³⁴



25%



50%

• Greater Risk of Health Problems:

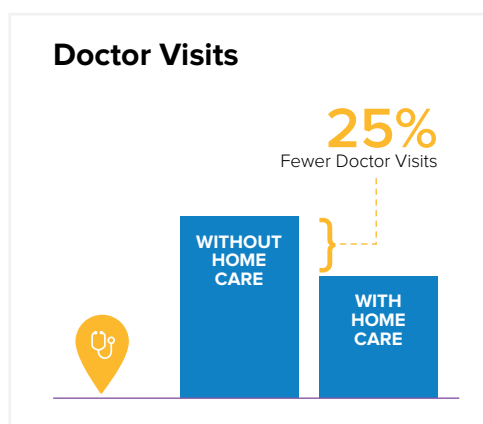
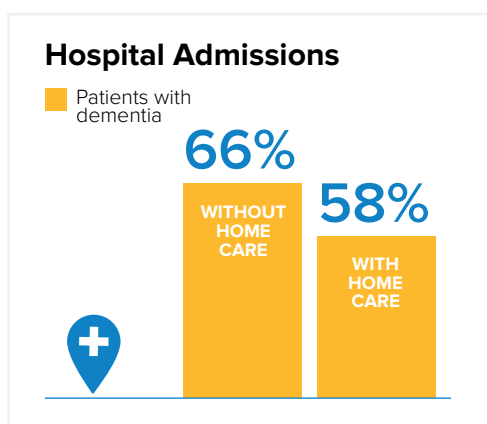
One study found that working family caregivers are 25 percent more likely to be diagnosed with high blood pressure and 50 percent more likely to experience daily physical pain than their colleagues who do not have caregiving responsibilities.³⁵

Faced with these challenges, most family caregivers find it is impossible to sustain a high level of care. As a result, their elderly loved ones either receive less care than they deserve or family caregivers cut out other activities in their lives.

Home care helps alleviate these burdens. In fact, one study found that family caregivers using home care report better overall health, better ability to hold jobs, and fewer lost wages than those without home care.³⁶

Improving Health Outcomes for Seniors

Home care can improve the physical and mental wellbeing of care recipients. In addition to helping prevent falls, keeping seniors on track with their medications, providing nutritious meals, and helping maintain personal hygiene, caregivers can also provide doctors with valuable information that may help to improve diagnosis and treatment of seniors. The result: better health outcomes for seniors and lower overall health care costs.



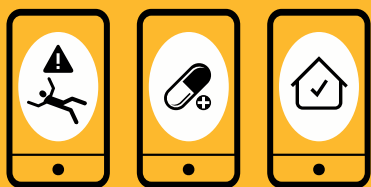
- **Home Care Reduces Hospital Visits:**

In one study, seniors with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia receiving paid home care had notably lower rates of in-patient hospital admissions—58 percent vs. 66 percent without home care.³⁷

- **Home Care Reduces the Need for Doctor Visits:**

Another study found that seniors using paid in-home care reported 25 percent fewer doctor visits each year than older adults who did not have such care.³⁸

TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF HOME CARE



Innovations such as fall detectors, pill reminders, and smart homes can help seniors live at home longer. Technology not only empowers caregivers in the home, but is a powerful means to support and

inform family caregivers and improve care for seniors. In fact, a recent study shows that the combination of mobile technology and observations from care workers in the home can help predict 30-day readmissions, a valuable and cost-effective approach to innovative health care delivery.³⁹

Home care companies are embracing these innovations to improve the efficiency and delivery of care. Researchers at Harvard Medical School are developing software that will strengthen caregivers' ability to detect and report changes in their clients' health. The project is aimed at providing better on-

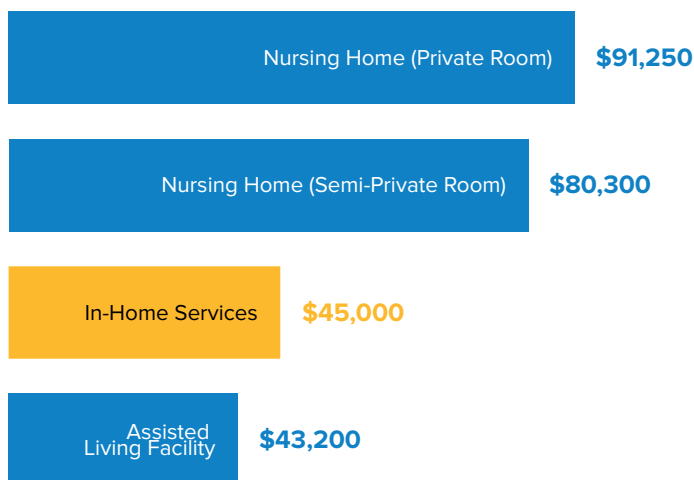
the-job tools for caregivers and ultimately prevent hospitalizations, improve health outcomes, and lower Medicare spending among private-pay home care recipients.⁴⁰

Of course, no app or smart device can provide the same care assistance as an in-home caregiver, nor can technology replace the human touch, connection, and companionship between seniors and caregivers. Personalized care will always be essential to healthy, active aging—but technology is an enabler and one way to improve overall care delivery.

Reducing Overall Health Care Costs

In addition to helping improve the health of older Americans, private-pay home care provides a more cost-effective option for long-term care. By promoting better health and wellbeing among older Americans, home care services reduce public health care costs.

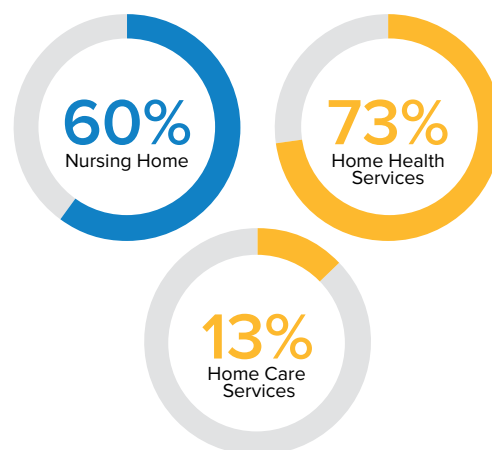
The Annual Cost of Long-Term Care



■ Takes seniors out of their homes ■ Keeps seniors in their homes

Source: Genworth 2015 Cost of Care Survey: Home Care Providers, Adult Day Health Care Facilities, Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes.

Percentage of Care Financed by Government Funding



Source: 6th Annual Home Care Pulse Private Duty Benchmarking Study (2014).

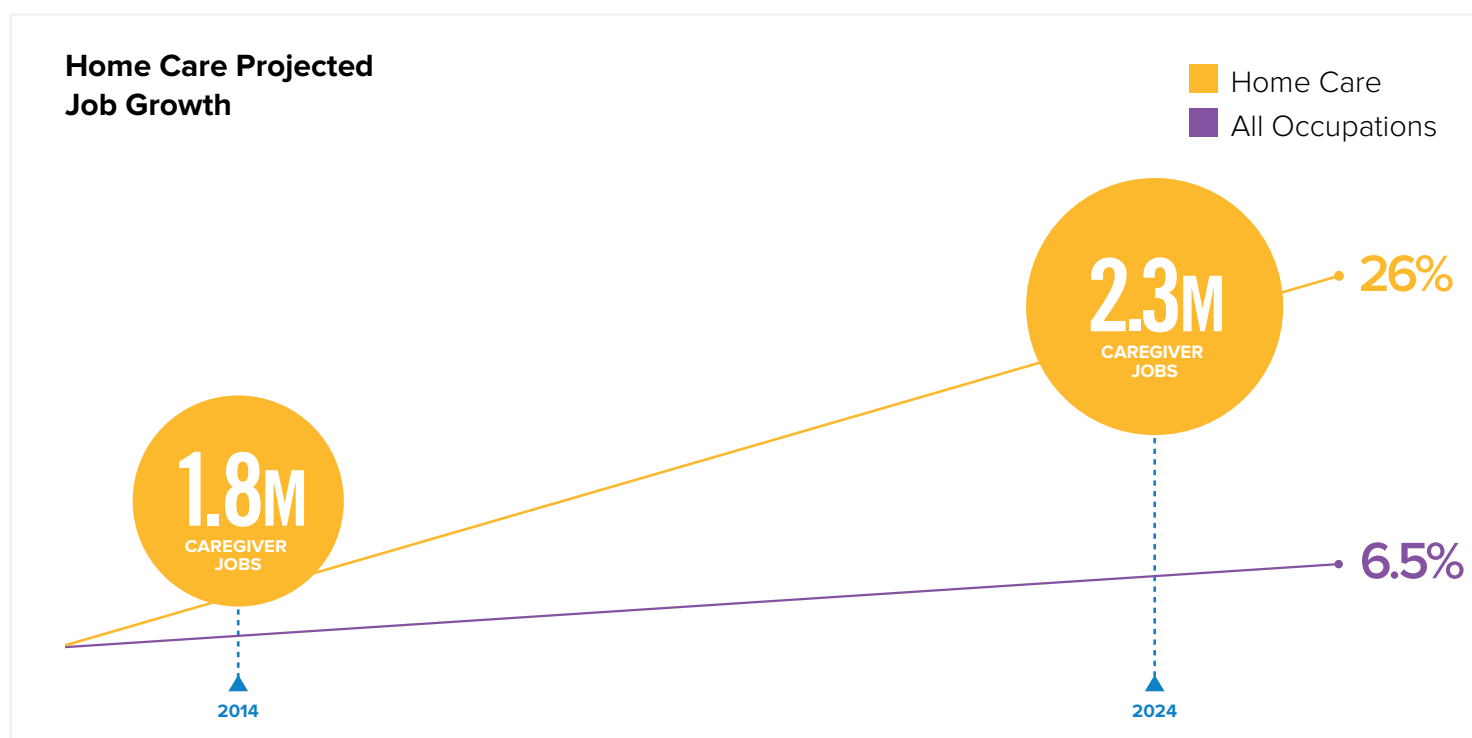
- **A Better Option Than Costly Institutionalized Care:** In 2015, the median annual cost of services providing in-home care for seniors was approximately \$45,000 for an average of 44 hours of care per week, half the annual cost of \$91,250 for a private room in a nursing home.⁴¹

- **Reducing the Strain on Government Health Programs:** Recent data shows that more than 60 percent of national spending on nursing home care is paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, and other sources of public funding.⁴² If even a fraction of nursing home care could be redirected to home care, it could lead to billions in savings to the U.S. health care system.

- **Lowering Overall Health Care Costs:** The U.S. saved as much as \$25 billion in hospital costs in 2008 alone due to the growth of home care services over the previous decade.⁴³

Driving Economic Growth and Job Creation

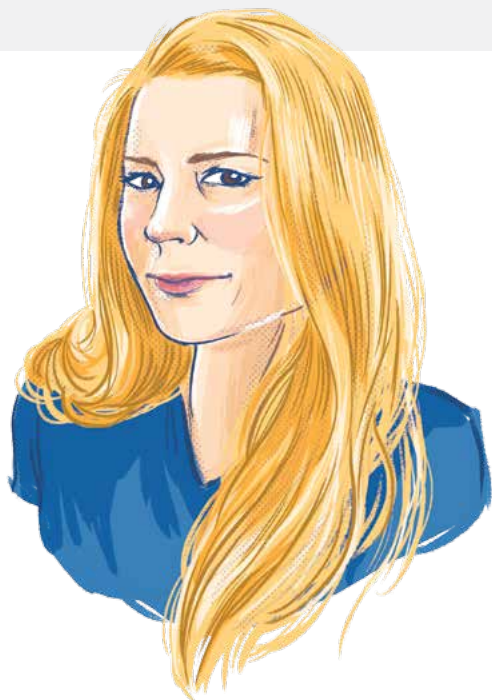
The home care industry drives job creation and economic growth in the U.S. Vibrant and growing, the industry provides good employment opportunities for women—who currently represent a majority of the caregiver workforce—and minorities, representing roughly half of the caregiver workforce.⁴⁴



• **A Growing Industry:** Over the last five years the home care industry has grown by more than 50 percent in terms of new entrants.⁴⁵ This growth will only continue as demographics fuel demand.

• **Creating Jobs Faster Than Other Sectors:** Job growth for caregivers, which are categorized as “personal care aides” by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, is projected to increase by 26 percent through 2024, compared to just 6.5 percent on average for all occupations.⁴⁶ This job sector is growing much faster than other occupations in the U.S. In 2014, there were nearly 1.8 million caregivers working in the U.S. with the potential to create nearly 500,000 more jobs by 2024.⁴⁷

Career Opportunity in a Growing Field



“I’ve been working as a caregiver for four years now, and I’ve decided that this is the field where I want to spend my career.”

PATRICIA MEADOWS,
CAREGIVER, DELAWARE

I’ve been working as a caregiver for four years now, and I’ve decided that this is the field where I want to spend my career. I think that it offers personal rewards, and a sense of fulfillment, which few other jobs can provide, even in the area of caregiving and nursing. I started my career when I was 21, but I wasn’t sure exactly what I wanted to do. I worked in a nursing home for a while, but I didn’t like it that much. It was a little too impersonal for me. I switched over to home care, and I’ve really enjoyed it ever since.

The level of connection I feel with each client sets it apart from every other caregiving job I’ve had. I really get the chance to know my clients and their families—their history, their interests, and so on. When you make that connection, it really makes helping them with their activities of daily living and improving their quality of life very rewarding. On the one hand, it helps you to do a better job, since you’re very tuned into their needs and preferences. But it also makes doing a good job all the more fulfilling, because you’re improving the life of someone you know really well.

Working as a caregiver, I have learned that every case—and every person—is different. Even if diagnoses are similar, patients and their families may handle things in different ways. As a caregiver, it’s important to be in tune with that and adjust accordingly in order to provide the best care. For some, like those with dementia, that might mean communicating more with their families and neighbors. For others, it might mean that they don’t need that much physical help, but are more looking for someone to help with feelings of loneliness.

I love my job for many reasons, but I guess if had to say what I like most about being a caregiver, it would be the one-on-one with my clients. We spend a lot of time together, and that’s where a lot of the benefits come in, both for me and the client. I become close with them and their families, and I feel that I’m a source of strength and comfort. Knowing that I’ve accomplished that with each person and family makes all of my efforts worthwhile.

Improving Productivity of Working Caregivers

In addition to reducing public health care costs—a benefit to the U.S. economy—home care services also promote economic growth by increasing workforce productivity. Professional home care services can enhance productivity by saving family caregivers time, allowing them to stay on the job, miss fewer work days, and keep focused while at work.

Annual Productivity Loss

Due to Elder Caregiving

\$34B

TOTAL LOSS

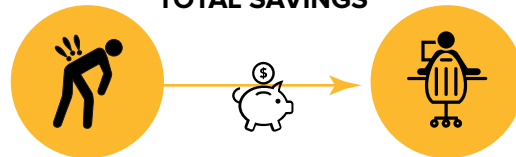


Annual Employer Health Care Savings

Due to Home Care Services

\$13.4B

TOTAL SAVINGS



- **Home Care Reduces Workplace Absences:** The productivity loss to U.S. businesses due to informal caregiving has been estimated to be as high as \$34 billion annually. Some of these costs are due to absenteeism (\$5.1 billion), shifts from full-time to part-time work (\$4.8 billion), turnover (\$6.6 billion), and workday adjustments (\$6.3 billion).⁴⁸

- **Home Care Lowers Employer Health Costs:** Professional home care services also help alleviate health- and stress-related problems for family caregivers employed outside the home, potentially saving U.S. employers \$13.4 billion annually in health care costs.⁴⁹

“I feel comfortable because I know I can go to my job and not worry if I’m going to have care for my mom while I’m trying to work.”

Elizabeth Cole, *family caregiver, North Carolina*

Like Part of the Family



“She shared that enormous responsibility of caring for my mother, and that relieved a lot of the stress that I felt.”

LYNN WRIGHT,
FAMILY CAREGIVER, NORTH CAROLINA

I raised two children, but I have never felt a bigger responsibility than the day that I left the hospital with my mom, knowing that she couldn't take care of herself. She needed a lot of help around the house, but I couldn't be there all the time. And she was a challenge...there's no two ways about it. My mother was strong-willed, determined, and she had her own thoughts about how things needed to be. We needed someone special to support us, both me and my mom.

When Tracey Read entered our lives as Mom's caregiver, I was thankful because I knew right away that they were going to click. That was a really big relief for me. Tracey was always a ray of sunshine when she came in. Regardless of her work load, she always came in and did the job that she needed to do, plus some more. I really trusted her, and felt like my mother was in good hands.

Tracey began to work into our lives—mine as much as my mother's—because she gave me comfort in knowing that she was here. She shared that enor-

mous responsibility of caring for my mother, and that relieved a lot of the stress that I felt. Even if it was just little things, knowing that I had someone else there was very important to me. Tracey became like a part of the family. She was great with my mom, and with me, and I knew I could always depend on her.

The day that my mother passed away, Tracey was here. I came in early, and she came in right behind me and was here all day. She placed her hands on my shoulders, and she was there for me. So the comfort was not just for my mom; it was for me, too. Tracey is absolutely my hero because she made every day with my mom the best day that it could be.

Providing a Flexible and Enriching Job Opportunity

Not only does a career in home care create an important income opportunity for millions of Americans, many professional caregivers believe their work assisting seniors is personally enriching and rewarding. Few career tracks offer the opportunity to connect with people on a meaningful level and directly help others improve their lives each day. In many cases, professional caregivers enjoy flexible hours, making home care careers an especially attractive option for working mothers, older employees, and part-time entrepreneurs.

In 2015, the Home Care Association of America conducted focus groups with caregivers from Chicago and Atlanta. Here's what they had to say about their jobs:

“Some clients don’t have family, or their family doesn’t give them much time. So you’re all they have: their voice, their right-hand person.”

“You really feel like you’re making a difference in the world. All of us can’t be basketball players and entertainers and stuff. But we’re here to take care of the entertainers at the end.”

“I really have fun at this job. I love it. I wouldn’t rather be doing anything else.”

“These clients, they used to be somebody. And now they feel like they have no purpose. So you have to remind them that they do have a purpose. Make them feel like life is still worth living.”

A Rewarding Career At Any Age



“I’m glad that I’ve been able to help others, instead of retiring altogether, and I’d recommend becoming a caregiver to anyone looking for a rewarding career.”

MARY HARTSOCK,
CAREGIVER, MARYLAND

When I wanted to start a new job later in my life, caring for others seemed like a natural choice. I had never heard the word “caregiver” before, but I’d been one my whole life. I took care of my siblings when I was young, owned and operated my own child care center for over 20 years, and cared for my husband before his passing. More than any job or career, caring for others made me feel fulfilled and uplifted. I was 79 years old, but I didn’t want to retire from everything. So I became a professional caregiver.

The reason I enjoy this job is simple. If I can help a person when they’re sick and make them feel better, I just feel happy about that. I feel a special connection with every client, and that’s what inspires me to go above and beyond for them. I know they’re counting on me to be there, and I haven’t missed a shift in 10 years. During Hurricane Sandy, I lost water and electricity for five days, but I still made it to work.

I practice the drive to a new home before my first day, to make sure that I’ll be on time. I attend extra training classes that teach me how to better care for people. I make sure to build individual relationships with my clients, and understand what they want and need. You have to get to know the clients before you can actually work with them with any success.

I’m 91 years old now, but I enjoy this job so much that I plan to keep doing it part-time, for as long as I can. It’s that personal bond with each individual, and the satisfaction I get from helping them, that keeps me going. Since becoming a caregiver, I’ve always loved going to work. I’m glad that I’ve been able to help others, instead of retiring altogether, and I’d recommend becoming a caregiver to anyone looking for a rewarding career. There’s a level of fulfillment you don’t find in many jobs.

America is aging. Millions of seniors already need some form of assistance. And millions more will require care in the coming decades. Traditional care facilities—such as hospitals and nursing homes—are not designed to handle the care needs of healthier, active seniors who want to age at home. Family members are already stretched thin.

To deal with these challenges, America needs a robust continuum of care options to meet the needs of all Americans.

Home care is a vital segment of that health care continuum.

It allows seniors to age in their homes—exactly as they desire. It provides peace of mind to family members who know their loved ones are getting the care they need and deserve. It improves the health, safety, and emotional wellbeing of America's elderly—easing the burden on already-strained public health resources.

The Home Care Association of America: The Industry's Unified Voice in Washington, D.C.



(2014 data)

FOOTNOTES

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Founded in 2002, the Home Care Association of America is the industry's leading trade association for providers of home care, which encompasses a broad range of services that supports seniors' wellbeing and enables them to age in place. HCAOA protects the interests of seniors by setting the standard for high-quality care; represents the industry's unified voice in Washington, DC and state governments across the country; and connects the industry's members through its education and awareness efforts. Today, HCAOA represents more than 2,500 member companies that employ more than 500,000 caregivers across the United States.



Global Coalition on Aging

The Global Coalition on Aging is the world's leading business voice on aging policy and strategy, aiming to reshape how global leaders approach and prepare for the 21st century's profound aging demographic shift. GCOA uniquely brings together a cross-section of influential global companies with common strategic interests in aging and an optimistic view of its impact. Working together with business, governments, global institutions, NGOs and academia, and recognizing the once extravagant prospect of growing old has now become the norm, GCOA shapes the dialogue and advances solutions to ensure aging is a path for economic growth, winning business strategies, and social wellbeing.