



La Crosse County Aging Unit

Bridging care from our community to your home.



Family Caregivers Newsletter

September/October 2015

Caregiving in the U.S. 2015 | Focused Look at Caregivers of Adults Age 50+
Conducted by AARP & National Alliance for Caregiving | June 2015

This is the second of two companion reports to the full report of the study entitled *Caregiving in the U.S. 2015*. This companion report focuses on 1,087 unpaid family caregivers who provide care to an adult age 50 and older. The other companion report—*Caregivers of Younger Adults: A Focused Look at Those Caring for Someone Age 18 to 49*—provides detail on caregivers of younger adults.

Information Needs and Caregiving Support – Key Findings

- An estimated 34.2 million American adults have served as an unpaid caregiver to someone age 50 or older in the prior 12 months.
- Caregivers of someone 50+ are 50.3 years old, on average, and most are female (60%). The majority (86%) of 50+ caregivers provide care for a relative, 47% care for a parent or parent-in-law. One in 10 cares for a spouse. One in four caregivers of someone 50+ is providing care to the oldest-old, those who are ages 85 or older. On average, 50+ caregivers' recipients are 74.7 years old.
- A third of caregivers say a health care provider, such as a doctor, nurse, or social worker has asked them what was needed to care for their recipient, but only 16% report similar conversations about self-care. A greater percentage of age 50+ caregivers find these conversations helpful than the percentage who report having had them – revealing a 6% “need gap” for conversations about recipient care needs, and an 11% “need gap” for conversations about self-care needs.
- More than eight in 10 caregivers of someone age 50+ say they could use more information or help on caregiving topics. Caregivers most commonly want information about keeping their loved one safe at home (43%) and about managing their own stress (42%). One in four reports it is difficult to get affordable care services in his or her loved one's community.
- Caregivers of the oldest-old (those age 85 or older) are more likely to have already made modifications to their loved one's home, and they also show a greater need for information about incontinence and making end-of-life decisions.
- When asked to gauge how helpful several policies might be to their caregiving experience, the most popular proposals relate to hospitals' or facilities' interactions with themselves, the caregivers. Half would like their own name on their recipient's medical chart, 45% would like to require hospitals to demonstrate medical/nursing tasks, and 43% want to be informed about major decisions. Of three policies focused on providing financial support to caregivers, about a third most prefer being paid for some of their care hours, while three in 10 most prefer an income tax credit.

For a full copy of this report visit the National Alliance for Caregiving website at:
<http://www.caregiving.org/caregiving2015/>

“The aging aren't only the old; the aging are all of us.” Alexandra Robbin

10 Tips for Hiring In-Home Help Through an Agency | Family Caregiver Alliance

<https://caregiver.org/10-tips-hiring-home-help-through-agency>

Recently, Sandy's 82-year-old mother has agreed to having a helper come into the home a few times per week to help with meal preparation, grocery shopping and some light house-keeping. As age and arthritis affects her ability to comfortably complete these daily tasks, Sandy and her mom realize that hiring an in-home caregiver will allow Sandy to maintain her current work schedule while ensuring that there is someone available to assist her mother during weekdays. While both Sandy and her mother are excited about the prospect of some extra help, they're unsure of how to go about hiring an in-home caregiver.



Although there are many reputable home-care agencies, families are often caught off guard by news stories of in-home caregivers who are abusive, under-trained or completely unsupervised. Thus, researching home care providers and taking the steps to hire an agency, and caregiver, that best meet your needs can help ensure that your loved ones are safe and well cared for in the hands of an in-home caregiver.

1. Assess Your Needs

The availability of in-home help ranges from companion care to keep a senior company and assist with light housekeeping or errands, all the way to skilled nursing for individuals with debilitating health conditions. If you're unsure of the best fit for your loved one, your physician, or an initial assessment visit from a home care provider can help determine what type of care is best suited to your particular situation.

2. Work with a reputable agency

Some family caregivers consider hiring an individual directly to provide the care, as opposed to hiring someone through a home-care agency. While working directly with a caregiver may provide some cost savings, it is important to remember that by choosing to do so, you'll also be acting as an employer and be solely responsible for oversight, hiring, firing, background checking, confirming certifications, and more. By working with a reputable agency, you hand off a greater share of these duties enabling you to focus on your role as a family caregiver seeking help, rather than a family caregiver and employer.

3. Ask about caregiver background checks

There's nothing wrong with being picky about who you allow to provide care for an elderly loved one. Be sure to ask agencies if they background check their caregivers and if so, what methods they use. If you feel uncomfortable about a home care agency's procedure for screening caregivers, it may be best to trust your gut and use a different provider.

4. Inquire about caregiver training

Ask what training and certification requirements caregivers are required to meet for employment, if any. Basic certifications like CPR and First Aid may provide peace of mind that basic aid is available in case of an accident while the caregiver is on duty, as well as give you an idea about the hiring standards of the company. Special language skills or cultural capacity such as training to work with Holocaust survivors or LGBT community members may be important for your needs.

5. Ask whether the agency meets local certification requirements

Requirements for home care agency certifications vary from state to state. However, inquiring about an agency's State certification status can help you gauge their legitimacy and ensure monitoring from regulatory agencies. For information on specific agency certification requirements in your agency, contact your local Area Agency on Aging (FCA's Family Care Navigator can help with this), or your local department of senior services.

6. Evaluate the supervision process

With caregivers working in the home, a common concern of family caregivers is a lack of supervisory oversight. However, family caregivers have a right to ask about how the agency supervises the quality of care in the home. Ask about drop-in supervisor visits, and tools like home care software used to manage caregiver clock-ins and care plans during a shift.

7. Ask to meet potential caregivers

You probably want to make sure the caregiver that you choose is not only well trained, but that they are also compatible with both you and your loved one. Ask the home care agency about their process for matching caregivers with clients and ensure that both you and your loved one can meet the caregiver prior to their first shift to be sure the match is a good fit.

8. Line out billing ahead of time

Depending on the types of services provided by the agency, as well as the specific condition of your loved one, some in-home care services may be covered by Medicare, Medicaid or long term care insurance. Don't hesitate to talk to the home care agency's intake coordinator about the rate for services, as well as billing practices ahead of time to help avoid unexpected charges.

9. Ask for references

For assurance about the proficiency of a home care agency that you're considering, you have the right to ask for references. Most reputable home care agencies will be able to provide you with referrals of current clients or referral partners that can attest to their experience with the agency.

10. Talk about a care plan

When you're paying for someone to provide in-home care, you'll likely want to be sure that they're addressing the tasks they've been hired for. Discuss a plan of care with the home care agency intake personnel and caregivers prior to the first shift, and ask about how the agency tracks the progress and completion of care plans. With a good plan of care, you can be sure that your loved one is having their essential needs met, be it help with keeping up the house or assistance with bathing. A plan for care helps make sure that that nothing significant is overlooked.

Accepting help from a home care agency can be a major change for both family caregivers and their loved ones. Choosing an agency to hire can be a time consuming process, but when armed with the right questions, you can help put your nerves at ease when choosing who to trust with the care of your loved one. More in-depth coverage of this topic is available in our online fact sheet, [Hiring In-Home Help](#).

Community Resources & Events



JOIN US FOR THE WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S!

2015 Walk to End Alzheimer's - La Crosse

September 19th, 2015

Registration at 9:00am | Walk Ceremony at 10:30am

Route Length: 2 miles

Myrick Park ...

2020 Myrick Park Drive, La Crosse, WI

Alzheimer's Association @ www.alz.org

Take care of your body.

It's the only place you have to live in.



La Crosse EXPAND EXercise Program for Adults with Neurologic Disorders



UW-L Physical Therapy Program offers a physical activity program specifically designed for individuals with neurologic disorders.

Target Population: Parkinson disease, Multiple Sclerosis, balance disorders, and those recovering from stroke or head injury

Participants work with PT students to develop and implement a physical activity program designed to meet goals for health & function.

Participants need to have some ability to walk - with or without help.

Program participants attend 2 sessions per week in individual or group-based activities designed to promote fitness, wellness, and the prevention of falls

The program runs each year:
September -December and February -May
Monday & Wednesday, 3:30-5:30 pm

For more information and for enrollment details contact:

John Greany, PhD, PT; Phone: 608-785-8461; Email: jgreany@uwla.edu
Erin Hussey, DPT, NCS; Phone: 608-785-5065; Email: ehussey@uwla.edu
Program Fax number: 608-785-8460

National Falls Prevention Awareness Day



**Wednesday, September 23, 2015
1:00 – 4:30pm
First Presbyterian Church
233 West Avenue South
La Crosse, WI**

FREE Event! You are invited to learn:

- ◇ How to reduce your risk of falling
- ◇ What to do after a fall
- ◇ Falls Prevention Resources available in the county

Presentations

1:00 – 1:15 I've Fallen and I CAN Get Up

1:20 – 1:40 Medication and Falls

1:45 – 2:00 Home Safety

Reduce your risk of falling at home

2:05 – 2:20 Aging in Place

Learn how to live at home longer

2:25 – 2:55 Strength & Balance Exercise and Bone Health

Discover how exercise programs can increase strength and balance to reduce falls as well as impact bone health. Stepping ON, Strong Seniors and Tai Chi Fundamentals will be discussed with practice exercises.

3:00 – 4:30 Community Resources Fair - Visit with professionals from local agencies

For more information:

www.lacrossestopfalls.org

or call

The La Crosse County Aging Unit

608-785-9710

Educational Events



Successful Aging Program

The **Successful Aging Program** offers monthly educational sessions to give you the opportunity to socialize and learn something new. From cooking for one or two, to Alzheimer's updates, the topics are designed with you in mind.

PLEASE NOTE CORRECTION: Sessions take place on the fourth **TUESDAY** of each month. Refreshments are available at no charge from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and sessions start at 2:30 p.m. and go until 3:30 p.m.

Cost: No Charge

Location: Marycrest Auditorium, 2nd floor of the Mayo Clinic Hospital Building,
700 West Avenue South, La Crosse

Events are free of charge and anyone is welcome to attend. For more information or to be added to the mailing list please call **Elder Services at 608-392-9505**.

*Laughter is timeless.
Imagination has no age.
And dreams are forever.
Walt Disney*



Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an educational program designed to help family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a relative or friend. You will benefit from this class whether you are helping a parent, spouse, or friend. Class meets for 90 minutes, once per week, for six weeks.

Participants will learn to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate feelings
- Increase their ability to make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources.

Date/Time: Fall Sessions starting in late October 2015

Location: To Be Determined

Cost: \$10 per person (Includes a copy of "The Caregiver Helpbook")

Respite Care: If you need respite care for your loved one while you attend the classes, please contact Amy Brezinka to make arrangements.

For more information or to be added to the mailing list, please contact:
Amy Brezinka at 608-785-3460 or abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

Educational Events



15th Annual September Series on Dementia

This event is free and open to the public.

Knowledge is Power

Wednesday, September 2, 2015

The Power in Understanding Dementia and Behaviors

Learning specific communication techniques, to use with individuals who have dementia, can make a powerful difference in understanding and dealing with behaviors.

Suzanne Bottum-Jones, BSN, MA

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

The Power of Legal and Financial Planning

Decision making becomes easier when you plan ahead.

Tina Johnson, Benefit Specialist, Aging and Disability Resource Center &

Art Peek, MSW, Advance Care Planning Coordinator, Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

Powerful Tools for Caregiving

Empowering family caregivers to increase their self-care and reduce stress.

Amy Brezinka, BSW, Caregiver Coach Program, La Crosse County Aging Unit

Terry Fleming, CSW, Dementia Care Program Coordinator, Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare

Time 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Refreshments will be served

Mayo Clinic Health System - 700 West Ave. South - La Crosse, WI
Marycrest Auditorium - Hospital Building - Second Floor

**Brought to you by the Department of Geriatrics Dementia Care Program and
Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare Foundation.**

For more information call 608-392-9505 or 1-800-362-5454, ext. 29505.

mayoclinichealthsystem.org

Franciscan Healthcare

Resources for Care Partners

Caregiver Support Groups

Support Group for Persons with Dementia and Care Partners

When: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the Month from 3pm to 4pm
Where: Village on Cass, 225 South 24th Street, La Crosse
Contacts: Chris Brown, Terry Fleming and Art Peek at 608-392-9505



Family Support Group—Alzheimer's/Dementia

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6pm-7pm
Where: Bluffview Memory Care, 2101 Bluffview Court, Holmen
Contact: Bluffview Memory Care Management Team at 608-526-5864

Caregiver Support Group

When: Last Wednesday of the month at 1:15pm
Where: Hillview Health Care Center—Sunshine Room
3501 Park Lane Drive, La Crosse
Contact: Nikki Weisenberger at 608-789-4867

Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Thursday of the month at 1pm
Where: Lakeview Health Center, 902 E Garland Street, West Salem
Contact: Luann Rose at 608-786-1400 ext. 40155

Caregiver Support Group— *A group for Women caring for someone with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*

When: Every Monday from 8:30am—Noon
Where: Perkin's in Onalaska—9428 Wisconsin 16, Onalaska, WI
Contact: Mitch Mader at 608-519-0753

Parkinson's Support Group

When: 4th Tuesday of each month from 2pm-4pm
Where: Gundersen Health System
Contact: Julie Halzwarth at 608-775-2789

Great Rivers 2-1-1 ~ For more information about area support groups dial 2-1-1

Lunch Bunch Memory Café

The **Lunch Bunch Memory Café** is a place to meet with others diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), Alzheimer's/ dementia and their care partner in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Once a month, this group offers a chance for everyone to have some fun and share a positive experience in a supportive environment. It's a place to talk with others who may be on a very similar journey and to learn, "*You are not alone*".

When: This group meets the last Tuesday of every month

Time: 11:30am—1:00pm

Location: Black River Beach Neighborhood Center
1433 Rose Street
La Crosse, WI 54603



Lunch & beverage provided at a suggested donation of \$4 per person

Topics: Art, music, health and wellness topics will be featured at each café. Details will be announced on monthly invites.

Upcoming Dates:

September 29, 2015—Fall Festivities with music by "Grumpy Old Men"
October 27th—Mary Bassing, MD—Geriatrician with Gundersen Health System

RSVP is encouraged. If you would like more information, or to be added to our mailing list, please contact:
Amy Brezinka with the La Crosse County Aging Unit at **608.785.3460**.

NEW Memory Café!

La Crosse County Aging Unit | Caregiver Coach Program

Coping | Confidence | Connections

Travelled Roads Memory Café



When: 2nd Friday of each month (Beginning September 11, 2015)

Time: 10am—11:30am

Location: Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library
Community Room
201 Neshonoc Rd | West Salem, WI

The Memory Café is a place to meet with others living with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), Alzheimer's or other related dementia and their Care Partner in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Once a month, this group offers a chance for everyone to have some fun and share a positive experience in a supportive environment. It's a place to talk with others and to learn, "You are not alone".

Coffee and bakery items served for a suggested donation of \$1 per person

Topics: Art, music, health and wellness topics will be featured at each café.

Resources: Community resource information will be available each month. The Caregiver Coach will be available to answer questions and visit with Care Partners during the café.

If you would like more information, or to be added to our mailing list, contact
Amy Brezinka at 608.785.3460 or abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org



Take time today to appreciate someone who does something you take for granted.

Lifestyle Choices - Socialization



Join the Crowd!

Talking to others, getting out and about, sharing experiences—these types of social interactions can not only enrich our lives, they can also engage our brains. Socializing typically correlates to being part of a more stimulating environment and participating in more leisure, physical and mental activities. The relationship of leisure activities or social interactions to diminished risk for dementia suggests several mechanisms at work, including reduced stress and enhanced intellectual stimulation. These social ties may help protect the brain by building up a cognitive reserve to compensate for lost brain cells or connections.

People Need People

A few decades ago, Barbra Streisand became famous singing, “People who need people are the luckiest people in the world,” but the reality is, we *all* need people, and research studies increasingly prove it. Consider these findings about the importance of socialization:

- A landmark UCLA study found that the “fight or flight” response that has long been accepted as the normal reaction to stress is generally a male response. Women are more likely to “tend and befriend,” and this alternative may be a contributing factor to their longer life expectancy.
- Research has shown that people with regular social ties are significantly less likely to demonstrate cognitive decline when compared to those who are lonely or isolated.
- University of Michigan researchers who tested 3,610 people between the ages of 24 and 96 found that even 10 minutes of social interaction improved cognitive performance.

So if people need people for healthy aging, how can we nurture those relationships?

- ◆ **Make physical exercise a group exercise.** Taking a daily walk is good for your body and brain, and taking a walk with a friend may compound your sense of well-being. It is much easier to get your daily exercise if you do something you enjoy with someone you enjoy.
- ◆ **Put multiple minds together for brain aerobics.** Doing crossword puzzles or Sudoku is generally a solitary effort, but lots of brain-building activities can be done with others. Board games like Scrabble, Upwords, Trivial Pursuit and Smart Mouth, for example, are fun precisely because they involve combining the power of multiple minds.
- ◆ **Share a meal.** Eating a healthy diet is important, and, yet, perhaps the greatest aid to digestion is the company of others.
- ◆ **Enroll in a special interest group.** Groups abound for virtually every interest, whether it’s playing bridge or ballroom dancing. Even if the normally solitary act of reading a book is your way of relaxing, consider joining a book club to share thoughts and socialize. Also contemplate not just what you enjoy, but what you need. Many people find that a support group for those affected by Alzheimer’s disease, for example, provides the unique camaraderie of people who truly understand.
- ◆ **Join an online group.** If it’s difficult to get out and about because you live in a rural area, have health problems of your own or are caring for a loved one, the virtual world can open endless new opportunities.
- ◆ **Be a friend.** Many people need the non-judgmental listening that best friends can provide. Lend your ear to old and new friends alike.
- ◆ **Volunteer.** It’s possible to overcome your own troubles by helping others with their problems. Volunteer for a cause you believe in.

Socialization gives us a sense of belonging, of being part of a community—even if it’s a community of only three or four people. With community comes confidence: With confidence comes self-esteem and an increased sense of well-being. But the greatest benefit of socialization is that people who share experiences are much more likely to **laugh together**, and laughter may be the best boon to longevity we have.

Source: Alzheimer’s Prevention @ www.alzprevention.org | Contributed by Kathy Laenhue, who writes “[Brain Aerobics Weekly](#),” which provides printable brain teasers, and “[Wiser Now](#)” a monthly newsletter on dementia care..

Spotlight on Caregiving Blogs

◇ **Caregiving Cafe Blog** @ www.caregivingcafe.com/blog/

In this blog, you'll find useful and amusing tidbits to help you with your caregiving tasks. Do visit us whenever you need information or a quick pick-me-up!

◇ **Caregiving.com—Caregiving Blogs** @ www.caregiving.com/articles/blogged/

Caring for you as you care for family and friends. Our bloggers care for parents, spouses, children, grandparents, friends and anyone they consider family. Our bloggers also write about their lives after their caregiving roles end because of their family member's death.

◇ **Alzheimer's Reading Room** @ www.alzheimersreadingroom.com

Alzheimer's Reading Room is a one-stop resource that's consistently voted the number one blog by notable outlets like The New York Times. Editor Bob DeMarco cared for his mother, Dotty, as she bravely fought Alzheimer's in her final years. He continues to add to the more than 4,000 video and editorial items stored on the site. Topics include just about anything that will help educate and support caregivers from those just beginning their care-journey to those who are more familiar with the course of the disease.

◇ **Alzheimer's Front Row** @ www.alzheimersfrontrow.com/

This companion site to Alzheimer's Reading Room provides Bob DeMarco's wisdom and wit on life with this difficult condition. Alzheimer's Front Row touches on news and developments in the medical community. Its primary focus is the encouragement and support of caregivers and their loved ones.

DeMarco includes inspirational videos of Dotty and the remarkable things she continued to do despite her diagnosis. The editor punctuates the site with quotes, such as: "There is no substitute for the love of a caregiver."

Caregiver

I am the caregiver, the watcher, the guide
I walk down the hall with you by my side
a smile, a laugh, a hug or embrace
I watch the worry fall away from your face
I am the caregiver, the watcher, the guide
I walk down the hall with you by my side
I am your compass, your shining north star
I try to remind you of just who you are
I am the caregiver, the watcher, the guide
I walk down the hall with you by my side
Pictures and letters, music of old
keep your mind warm and away from the cold
I am the caregiver, the watcher, the guide
I walk down the hall with you by my side
the routine of night show no wear and tear
the light of the morning so soon will be here.

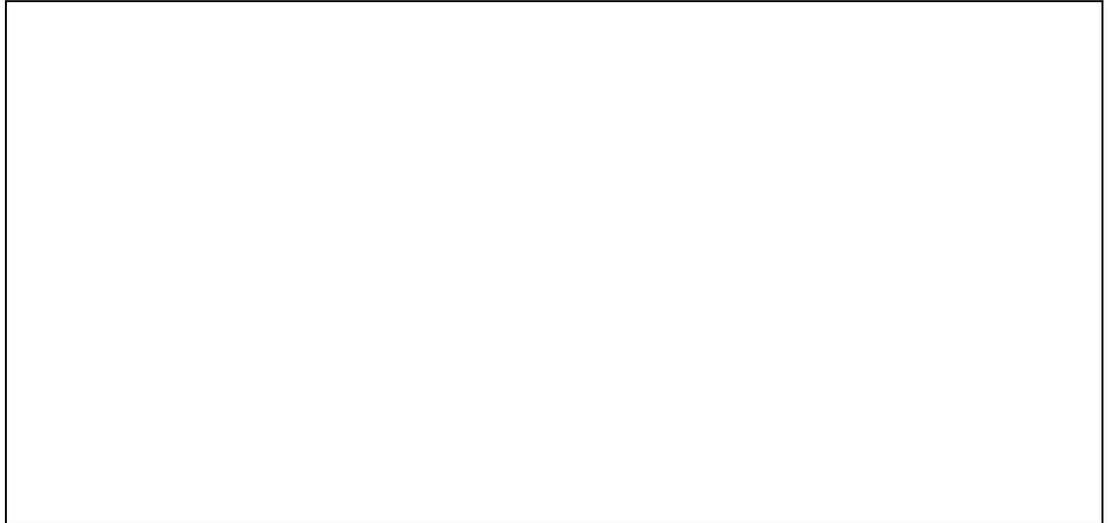


~Lee McCurley



La Crosse County Aging Unit
County of La Crosse, Wisconsin
Administrative Center • Room 2260
400 4th Street North • La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601-3200
(608) 785-9710 • FAX: (608) 785-6135
web site: www.co.la-crosse.wi.us

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Family Caregivers Newsletter

July/August 2015

La Crosse County Aging Unit
400 4th Street North, Room 2260
La Crosse, WI 54601-3200
608-785-9710
www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/aging/

Newsletter Editor:

Amy Brezinka, Program Coordinator
Caregiver Coach Program
608.785.3460
abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

The **La Crosse County Aging Unit** provides information and services that promote independence, and support the dignity of Seniors by allowing choices for living in and giving to their community.

Programs & Services include:

- Home-delivered Meals
- Meal Sites
- Transportation
- Caregiver Coach Program
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Gifted Hands
- Senior Farmers' Market
- Nutritional Supplements
- Wellness & Prevention
- Senior Life Newsletter

