

Caregiver Profile

The “Higher-Hour” Caregiver

National Alliance for Caregiving
AARP Public Policy Institute

WHO

The typical higher-hour caregiver supports a loved one by providing care for at least 21 hours or more a week (the average is 62.2 hours each week). She is a 51.8-year-old female, currently caring for one adult, such as a 68.4-year-old close female relative (parent or spouse), who needs care because of a long-term physical condition.

WHAT

This caregiver has been providing care for 5.6 years on average, spending 62.2 hours a week, helping with 2.6 ADLs (such as bathing and dressing),² 5.3 IADLs (such as running errands or managing finances), and medical or nursing tasks (such as wound care, giving injections, or managing medications). She advocates for her recipient, she monitors her recipient’s condition to adjust care accordingly, and she communicates with care professionals on her recipient’s behalf. She is the sole, unpaid care provider for her loved one and provides care without the assistance of paid help. The higher-hour caregiver has a very high burden of care (4.4 out of maximum 5).

WORK AND CAREER

It’s a 50-50 toss-up that the higher-hour caregiver is employed, but if she is, she works 33.5 hours a week. She is typically married or living with a partner. She is a high school graduate or has taken some college courses, but does not have a degree. Her average household income is \$45,700.

ABOUT THE CARE RECIPIENT

Typically, the care recipient lives with the caregiver in her household.

This profile summarizes data from the Caregiving in the U.S. 2015 research study, jointly conducted with the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP.¹ While the data presented below provide aggregate information about the average caregiver, it should be noted that the face of caregiving is changing. Family caregivers come in all variations and circumstances—from the grandson helping his grandmother out by cutting the grass and driving her to the store a couple hours a week; to the mother helping her adult son 10 hours a week with various activities due to his post-traumatic stress disorder; to the adult daughter caring for her mother with Alzheimer’s; to the wife caring for her husband around the clock to deal with his stroke, diabetes, and wound care.



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IMPACT OF PROVIDING CARE

This caregiver expects to continue to be a caregiver over the next 5 years, and she feels she had no choice in taking on care for her loved one. She reports moderate physical strain, a moderate to high amount of emotional stress, and little to no financial strain as a result of caregiving. It is moderate to highly difficult to perform ADLs (such as feeding, bathing, or dressing her loved one), and she has had some difficulty finding affordable care services in her loved one's community.

- 1 National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and AARP Public Policy Institute, *Caregiving in the U.S., 2015* (Bethesda, MD: NAC, and Washington, DC: AARP, June 2015).
- 2 ADLs include those tasks that provide assistance with basic personal tasks such as bathing, dressing, using the toilet, transferring to or from a bed or chair, caring for incontinence, and eating. IADLs are supports for everyday tasks, including housework, managing money, taking medication, shopping for groceries or clothes, using communication devices (like telephones), and caring for pets, among others. For more information, see <http://longtermcare.gov/the-basics/what-is-long-term-care/>.

About the National Alliance for Caregiving

Established in 1996, the National Alliance for Caregiving is a non-profit coalition of national organizations focusing on advancing family caregiving through research, innovation, and advocacy. The Alliance conducts research, does policy analysis, develops national best-practice programs, and works to increase public awareness of family caregiving issues. Recognizing that family caregivers provide important societal and financial contributions toward maintaining the well-being of those they care for, the Alliance supports a network of 80+ state and local caregiving coalitions and serves as Secretariat for the International Alliance of Carer Organizations. Learn more at www.caregiving.org.

About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

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