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***For Immediate Release***

**NEW STUDY REVEALS FAMILY CAREGIVERS WANT WEB-BASED AND MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES TO HELP THEM CARE FOR THEIR LOVED ONES**

- ***Personal Health Records, Web-based Care Coordination Programs and Devices to Help with Medications Rated as Most Helpful by Family Caregivers***
- ***Study Findings to be Presented at 2011 International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) Silvers Summit***

LAS VEGAS – Jan. 8, 2011 – A new survey reveals that the technology advances that have transformed how Americans work, play and interact have potential to alleviate the growing financial and emotional burdens on family members caring for sick or disabled loved ones.

The *e-Connected Family Caregiver: Bringing Caregiving into the 21st Century* study, released today by the National Alliance for Caregiving and UnitedHealthcare, a UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH) company, found more than two-thirds of family caregivers who have used some form of technology to help them with caregiving believe web-based and mobile technologies designed to facilitate caregiving would be helpful to them. Family caregivers provide an estimated \$375 billion worth of uncompensated care to loved ones annually. Previous studies have shown that many lack support systems and tools that could ease the burden financially and emotionally.

The survey examined family caregivers' receptivity to technology and assessed how helpful 12 particular technologies would be in supporting caregivers or helping them provide care. It also explored perceived barriers to using technology, factors that influence family caregivers' use of technology and sources of information about technology that caregivers trust. The findings will be presented today at the 2011 International Consumer Electronics Show's (CES) Silvers Summit.

“We know that our nation’s caregivers often put the needs of their care recipients ahead of their own, which can compromise their own health and create a stressful lifestyle,” said Dr. Richard Migliori, executive vice president, Business Initiatives and Clinical Affairs, UnitedHealth Group. “It’s encouraging to see that caregivers are open to incorporating technology into their caregiving routine as a way to make their jobs easier. As the technology and health care industries increasingly use these kinds of tools to improve care in hospitals and doctors offices, this survey is a reminder that these improvements could be equally helpful where care matters most – in the home. The use of new technologies can be a powerful tool to keep seniors independent as long as possible and support family caregivers.”

Technology to assist seniors and family caregivers in the home is one of the fastest-growing industries – some analysts predict it will be a \$20 billion market by 2020. A report published by AARP in 2008 showed that both seniors and family caregivers are seeking new technology products as a way to keep their loved ones living in their home as long as possible.

“Caregivers know that technology can be used to help them understand their loved one’s conditions and find resources and even support,” said Gail Hunt, CEO and president of the National Alliance for Caregiving. “With this survey, we wanted to look at ‘what’s next’ with technologies that can be brought to bear to help caregivers focus not only on the health of their loved one but their own health as well.”

### **Caregivers Receptive to Expanding Their Use of Technology**

All of the caregivers who participated in the survey have used the Internet or some other technology to help them provide care. Not surprisingly, searching the Internet for information or support related to caregiving was the most commonly cited use of technology (70 percent of survey respondents).

Nearly half of the survey respondents have used an electronic organizer or calendar to help them with caregiving (47 percent), and 11 percent have participated in a caregiving-related blog or online discussion. Four in 10 (41 percent) have used some other technological device or system – other than a standard computer or cell phone – to help them with their caregiving.

Caregivers were most receptive to technologies that help them deliver, monitor, track or coordinate their loved one’s health care. Of the 12 technologies in the survey, the three that appeared to have greatest potential for acceptance and usage by caregivers fall into that category, and more than half of the surveyed caregivers said none of the seven potential barriers examined in the survey would prevent them from trying each technology.

- **Personal Health Record Tracking:** 77 percent of caregivers reported that a website or computer software that could help them keep track of their care recipient’s personal health records, including his or her history, symptoms, medications and test results, would be very or somewhat helpful to them.
- **Caregiving Coordination System:** 70 percent of caregivers indicated that a shared electronic log for their loved one’s doctor appointments and other caregiving needs would be helpful. With this tool, caregivers could request support in their duties, and friends and family members could sign up to help on certain dates and times.
- **Medication Support System:** A device that reminds the patient about his or her prescription medications and dispenses pills when they should be taken would be helpful to 70 percent of family caregivers. This device would also provide directions on how to take each pill and alert the caregiver when the dosages were not removed from the device within a certain time period.

Strong majorities of caregivers – between 60 and 70 percent – indicated that three other technologies would also be helpful for them, but more than half of the survey respondents reported that barriers such as perceived expense of the technology and concern that the care recipient would not accept the technology could prevent them from trying the new tools.

- **Symptom Monitor and Transmitter:** 70 percent of survey respondents said an electronic device that would send information such as blood sugar or blood pressure readings to a doctor or care manager to help them manage their care recipient's condition would be helpful.
- **Interactive System for Physical, Mental and Leisure Activities:** 62 percent of caregivers reported that a TV-based device, similar to a Wii Fit, that would allow the caregiver to create a schedule of gentle physical activities and mental games for the care recipient would be helpful.
- **Video Phone System:** A phone with video capability or an Internet-connected computer with webcam that allows the caregiver to see the care recipient when they're not able to physically be together would be helpful for 61 percent of caregivers.

Sixty-nine percent also report they would be somewhat or very receptive to using a smartphone for applications to help them with caregiving.

### **Caregivers Stand to Benefit from Technology, Must Overcome Perceived Barrier of Expense**

The caregivers who participated in the survey recognized that technology holds the power to bring significant benefits to both them and their care recipients, helping them to save time (77 percent), more easily manage the logistics of caregiving (76 percent), increase their feelings of effectiveness as a caregiver (74 percent), reduce stress (74 percent) and make their care recipient feel safer (75 percent).

Long-distance caregivers – those who live one hour or more from their care recipient – were especially likely to think that technology could make them feel more effective as a caregiver (83 percent).

When asked whether the seven factors could potentially prevent them from trying these technologies, however, the most commonly reported obstacle was the perception that the technology would be expensive (37 percent, on average, across the 12 technologies). Despite this concern, almost half of caregivers surveyed thought technology could save them money (46 percent).

“We know from our past surveys of caregivers that the economic downturn has taken a toll on them. For example, one-third of working caregivers have had to work more hours or get another job to help cover their caregiving expenses, and 50 percent feel less comfortable asking for time off to attend to their caregiving duties,” said Hunt. “This study reveals caregivers’ concern about the perceived expense of these technologies. We need to ensure caregivers understand that many of these technologies are affordable or even free and provide assistance to help them find and utilize these helpful tools.”

### **Caregivers Identify Factors That Would Help Them Try New Technologies; Say Medical Websites Are Their Most Trusted Information Source**

The *e-Connected Family Caregiver: Bringing Caregiving into the 21st Century* study identified three factors that stand out as ways to encourage caregivers to try new technologies to help them with caregiving. The surveyed caregivers said they would be more likely to try a technology if:

- A health professional who is involved with the caregiver or their recipient explained that the technology would be helpful (88 percent);
- They saw a how-to explanation showing that it is very simple to install and use (80 percent);
- They were offered a three-year warranty on the technology (78 percent).

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More than three quarters (77 percent) of those surveyed said that a medical website, like WebMD or MayoClinic.com, is the source they are most likely to trust for information to help them decide whether they want to use a caregiving technology. Two-thirds said they trust a government website like Medicare or the Administration on Aging (67 percent) or a consumer review website (66 percent). Caregiving magazines or websites (57 percent) and caregiver forums on the Internet (50 percent) were the information sources that caregivers are next most likely to trust.

**NOTE TO EDITORS: The full findings of the study can be found at <http://unitedhealthgroup.com/main/Newsroom.aspx> or [www.caregiving.org](http://www.caregiving.org).**

### **Methodology**

This report is based on a quantitative online survey of 1,000 family caregivers, age 18 or older, who provide at least five hours per week of unpaid care to an adult relative or friend who needs help because of a physical or mental illness, disability or frailty. The questionnaire was fielded from Nov. 9 to 22, 2010. Respondents were general population members of an online panel who were screened for their caregiver status. All respondents were also screened to ensure they had already used some sort of technology to help them with caregiving, such as searching for caregiving information or support on the Internet, participating in an online forum or blog, using an electronic calendar or organizer, or using some other device or system.

### **About UnitedHealth Group**

UnitedHealth Group is a diversified health and well-being company dedicated to helping people live healthier lives and making health care work better. With headquarters in Minnetonka, Minn., UnitedHealth Group offers a broad spectrum of products and services through six operating businesses: UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual, UnitedHealthcare Medicare & Retirement, UnitedHealthcare Community & State, OptumHealth, Ingenix and Prescription Solutions. Through its family of businesses, UnitedHealth Group serves more than 75 million people worldwide. Visit [www.unitedhealthgroup.com](http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com) for more information.

### **About the National Alliance for Caregiving**

Established in 1996, the National Alliance for Caregiving is a non-profit coalition of national organizations focusing on issues of family caregiving. The Alliance was created to conduct research, do policy analysis, develop national programs, and increase public awareness of family caregiving issues. Recognizing that family caregivers make important societal and financial contributions toward maintaining the well-being of those for whom they care, the Alliance's mission is to be the objective national resource on family caregiving with the goal of improving the quality of life for families and care recipients. For more information, visit [www.caregiving.org](http://www.caregiving.org).

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