



National Alliance for Caregiving

Advancing Family Caregiving through Research, Innovation & Advocacy

Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act - Public Law No: 115-119

Bill Summary

Requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop, maintain and update an integrated national strategy to recognize and support family caregivers. Brings together relevant federal agencies and others from private and public sectors to advise and make recommendations regarding the national strategy.

National Alliance for Caregiving Support

We at the National Alliance for Caregiving endorsed the RAISE Family Caregivers Act because nearly 44 million family caregivers provide about \$470 billion annually in unpaid care to those in need. They take on challenges that impact their health, emotional wellbeing, and financial security. They help make it possible for older adults and people with disabilities to live independently in their homes and communities. Our research in 2015 found that twenty two percent of caregivers felt their health had gotten worse as a result of caregiving. One in five caregivers reported a high level of physical strain resulting from caregiving, while two in five consider their caregiving situation to be emotionally stressful. These difficulties are further compounded by a lack of formal recognition from the health care system. Only one third of caregivers have ever had a health care provider—such as a doctor, nurse, or social worker—ask about what was needed to care for their care recipient. Staggeringly, only sixteen percent of caregivers say a health care provider has asked what they need to take care of themselves. All too often family caregivers are not recognized and included in appropriate health and social service programs and are not receiving the care and support they require to serve in this role. A national strategy is necessary to effectively recognize the needs of all family caregivers, provide them with support, and include them in appropriate care models. Our country relies on the contributions that unpaid family caregivers make and we must recognize and support them. By supporting family caregivers, we can ensure people live at home where they want to be—helping to delay or prevent more costly care, unnecessary hospitalizations, and institutional care— saving taxpayer dollars.

Implementation

According to the bill, the Advisory Council has 12 months to produce the first annual report and 18 months to come up with an initial strategy. The goals of the strategy include identifying actions that government, communities, health providers, employers and others can take to support family caregivers.

Now is the time for advocates to speak up and prepare recommendations to be included in the national strategy, then we will need to ensure that those recommendations are implemented.