Family caregiving is an important public health issue. In fact, family caregivers face an increased risk of deteriorating health and financial insecurity—making the role of family caregiving itself a social determinant of health. The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the important role family caregivers play for those with serious health conditions as well as their risk factors. Their ability to provide care and their effectiveness in doing so will, however, depend on fundamental changes in the extent to which we formally recognize them as key contributors to the health of those for whom they care, integrate them into formal provider systems, and provide support that recognizes their health and wellness needs.

To address these challenges, we call attention to two specific root-level issues:

- **Family caregiver health and wellness is an issue that must be addressed.**
  40.7% of family caregivers reported having two or more chronic diseases.

- **Care coordination efforts are of particular concern as the complexity of care is increasing.**
  A greater proportion of family caregivers are providing care to those with multiple condition categories, with 45% reporting two or more condition categories.

The Framework for Family Caregiving and Public Health

The National Alliance for Caregiving, in partnership with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, developed a plan of action to expand the family caregiver support infrastructure within the public health sector. The Framework for Family Caregiving and Public Health identifies appropriate mechanisms for support and recognition via entities such as public health departments, research institutions, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, direct care workers, insurers, health care providers, and employers. The framework was designed in tiers to address actions that are likely to be driven by different sectors of the public health system.

**TIER 1 | PUBLIC HEALTH DATA GATHERING, RESEARCH, AND AWARENESS**

- **Strategy 1.1:** Family caregiver population health surveillance.
- **Strategy 1.2:** Family caregiver public health research & education.
- **Strategy 1.3:** Awareness efforts among health practitioners, emergency response officials, and employers regarding caregivers as providers of care and caregivers as an at-risk population.

**TIER 2 | SERVICE COORDINATION AND DELIVERY ACROSS SECTORS AND SILOES**

- **Strategy 2.1:** Entry-point service coordination for family caregivers across sectors
- **Strategy 2.2:** Expanded service delivery for family caregivers across conditions.

We need an expanded support infrastructure for family caregivers with intentional systemic improvements addressing social determinants of health. An infrastructure for public health that includes and understands the needs of family caregivers will be better prepared to interact with them not only on an everyday basis, but also during public health emergencies.

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