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NATIONAL ALLIANCE  
FOR CAREGIVING



Care Notes

Honoring Black History Month

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026

## Honoring Black Family Caregivers

This **Black History Month**, the National Alliance for Caregiving honors the millions of Black family caregivers who are and have been the quiet backbone of our nation's health and well-being.

Long before the term "family caregiver" entered the public lexicon, Black families were sustaining communities through a deep-rooted tradition of care. Historically denied access to formal healthcare systems and often excluded from conversations about long-term support, Black caregivers have always stepped in—stitching together safety nets with resilience, expertise, and love.



According to our [Caregiving in the US 2025 report with AARP](#), Black family caregivers are on the frontlines of the healthcare system—more often advocating with providers and performing medical and nursing tasks. They are more likely than any other group to live with their care recipient and to navigate complex conditions like dementia or developmental disabilities. These

caregivers are also more likely to be balancing care with careers and raising children, all while being younger than the average caregiver.

This month, we are not just celebrating the history of Black family caregiving—we are calling out the need to support it. We see you. We hear you. And we are working to ensure that the systems meant to help you finally reflect the dedication you show every day.

## CARE POLICY

### **A Win for Family Caregivers: Congress Protects Core Supports for Family Caregivers**

On February 3, **Congress passed the FY2026 Consolidated Appropriations Act** that provides for critical programs support the nation's 63 million family caregivers. Read our full statement [here](#).

These investments are modest, but they signal something significant: a growing recognition that family caregivers are not optional—they are essential. Their unpaid labor, valued at an estimated \$600 billion annually, keeps loved ones with chronic conditions and disabilities at home and out of costly institutional care.

The National Alliance for Caregiving extends our deep gratitude to champions including House Appropriations Chair Tom Cole and Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro, and Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins and Ranking Member Patty Murray. Their leadership reflects an understanding that supporting caregivers is not just a moral imperative—it is a sound economic investment.

We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.



### **Illinois Sets the Gold Standard for Aging and Caregiving**

The **Illinois Department on Aging** has recently

### **Take Action: Protect Family Caregivers from Medicaid Work Requirements**

Millions of family caregivers provide essential care that keeps loved ones with chronic

released **EngAging Illinois**—a decade-long plan to make the state a national leader in supporting older adults and family caregivers.

With Illinois' over-65 population projected to grow 40% by 2035, the plan tackles urgent disparities: one in five Black older adults live at or below poverty, and older adult poverty has risen 82% in 15 years.

For caregivers, commitments include a new statewide resource hub, a caregiver awareness campaign, expanded affordable housing, and modernization of home and community-based services.

Oversight comes next—with a commission, action groups, and annual public progress reports.

NAC applauds Illinois for showing states need not wait for federal action to lead.

Read the [full plan](#).

conditions, disabilities, or serious illnesses at home—saving the healthcare system billions each year. Yet many of these same caregivers, who rely on Medicaid for their own health coverage, are now at risk.

A new advocacy toolkit from the Caregiver Nation Coalition and then National Alliance for Caregiving equips caregivers and advocates to take action. It includes a customizable template letter to urge Governors, State Medicaid Directors, and State Aging Departments to broadly exempt all family caregivers from work reporting requirements.

From our brief, "[The Invisible Workforce: How Medicaid Work Requirements Overlook the Labor of Family Caregiving](#)," the data is clear. 12% of Medicaid enrollees cannot work due to caregiving responsibilities. Requiring them to document work hours threatens not only their own health coverage but also the stability of the home-based care they provide.

Family caregiving is work. It is time our policies recognized it as such.

[Access the Advocacy Toolkit](#)

## **NAC Urges CMS to Recognize Family Caregivers in Organ Transplant Model**

This month, the National Alliance for Caregiving submitted comments on the Organ Transplant Access (IOTA) Model, a proposed rule from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Our message: transplant success depends on family caregivers, and CMS policies must reflect that.

Drawing on NAC's research and direct work with transplant caregivers, we urged CMS to:

- Leverage existing Medicare billing codes for Caregiver Training Services so families receive education during waitlist and organ-offer discussions.
- Require transplant centers to screen and document caregiver needs routinely.
- Integrate on-site caregiver support—distress screening, medical education, and financial counseling—rather than relying on external referrals that create delays.
- Include caregivers in shared decision-making across the full transplant continuum, including palliative care and end-of-life planning.
- Retain health equity data collection to evaluate how social factors shape transplant access and caregiver support.

Family caregivers are the backbone of transplant care. We thank CMS for the opportunity to comment and will keep advocating for policies that recognize caregivers as the essential partners they are.

Read NAC's full comments [here](#).

**ELEVATING CAREGIVER VOICES**

# The Elder Mistreatment Prevention Toolkit for Public Health

The [Elder Mistreatment Prevention Toolkit for Public Health](#), co-developed by Trust for America's Health, Education Development Center, and the National Alliance for Caregiving, is now available.

Public health professionals are key to preventing elder mistreatment, and this toolkit is designed to support them. Using the AFPHS 6 Cs Framework, the toolkit includes guidance on creating and leading programs that:

- Incorporate elder mistreatment prevention
- Connect with partners to improve older adult health outcomes
- Collect relevant data
- Complement existing public health programming

This new resource is made possible by the generous support of The John A. Hartford Foundation.

A public health toolkit to protect older adults.

EXPLORE THE TOOLKIT

The John A. Hartford Foundation | Trust for America's Health | National Collaboratory to Address Elder Mistreatment | EDC.ORG | NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR CAREGIVING

[Access the Toolkit](#)

## NAC IN THE NEWS

MedCity News

A new [MedCity News](#) op-ed by Dr. Mihir Kamdar highlights a critical truth: family caregivers are the backbone of our healthcare system, yet they remain largely invisible. Drawing on our joint brief with C-TAC, "[Not Just Visitors](#)," Dr. Kamdar calls on healthcare leaders to take action and recognize and integrate family caregivers as essential partners in care delivery—because a system that excludes them cannot deliver serious illness care that is sustainable or just. Read the [full op-ed](#).

An article from **NC Health News** draws on [Caregiving in the US 2025](#), with AARP report to expose the threat Medicaid work requirements pose to family caregivers. The piece quotes NAC's Chief Externals Officer, Kim Cantor, and underscores that while federal law exempts caregivers, states must act to identify and protect them—or risk the very people propping up North Carolina's long-term care system losing their own coverage. [Read more.](#)

A **Washington Post** article illuminates the silent crisis of older spouses caring for partners alone. The piece draws on NAC's [Caregiving in the US 2025](#) report with AARP to document a significant shift: 15 percent of family caregivers are now spouses or partners, up from 10 percent a decade ago. Spouses are the hidden foundation of America's long-term care system—and they are buckling under the weight. [Read more.](#)

A **Washington Post** article spotlights a growing but often invisible group: grandchildren serving as primary caregivers for their elders. The piece draws on NAC's [Caregiving in the US 2025](#) report with AARP to show that 18 percent of caregivers ages 18 to 49 are caring for a grandparent—balancing this role with early careers, education, and young families, often with little experience or support. These stories underscore why caregiver recognition and resources must extend across generations. Read the [full article](#).

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

### A Movement Takes Shape: Philanthropy Steps Up for Family Caregivers

This month, **Inside Philanthropy** spotlighted what we at the National Alliance for Caregiving see every day: America is aging, families are stretched thin, and the need for systemic change has never been more urgent.

As the article notes, family caregiving today is too often “a demanding, unpaid side hustle that can sap savings, compromise health, and decrease productivity.” But alongside that reality, the piece captures something else: a growing, coordinated philanthropic movement determined to build a better future.

We are proud to stand at the center of that movement alongside a remarkable community of funders. Thanks to catalytic support from **The John A. Hartford Foundation, Pivotal, RRF Foundation for Aging, The CARE Fund, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation,** and **Grantmakers in Aging**, NAC is able to turn research and resolve into action.

Together, we are:

- **Changing the narrative**—redefining caregiving as essential social infrastructure, not a private burden.
- **Activating the Caregiver Nation Coalition and State Network**—moving the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers from paper to practice.
- **Mobilizing advocates at the Caregiver Nation Summit**—bringing hundreds of caregivers to Capitol Hill to turn lived experience into lasting policy.

We are grateful to Inside Philanthropy for lifting up this work—and to the funders who make it possible.



[Read the Full Article](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

All Month February

### [American Heart Month](#)

This February for **American Heart Month**, NAC recognizes the millions of family caregivers supporting loved ones with cardiovascular disease.

All Month February

### [Black History Month](#)

This **Black History Month**, NAC honors the legacy of Black family caregivers—who have long served as the backbone of their communities—and reaffirms our commitment to advancing the policies and resources they deserve.

All Month February

### [National Cancer Prevention Month](#)

During **National Cancer Prevention Month**, NAC honors the family caregivers at the center of every cancer journey—from prevention to survivorship. When caregivers are equipped with training and resources, patients thrive.

February

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### [National Caregivers Day](#)

This **National Caregivers Day**, we honor the 63 million family caregivers who provide essential care for loved ones with illnesses, disabilities, or aging-related needs. Caregivers are the unsung backbone of our healthcare system, yet often carry their role without recognition or support. We remain committed to fighting for the policies and resources caregivers deserve.

February

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## Heart Valve Awareness Day

This February for American Heart Month, NAC highlights heart valve disease—and invites you to explore Valve Disease Day resources and events from our partners at the Alliance for Aging Research: [ValveDiseaseDay.org](https://www.valvediseaseday.org)

February

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## Navigating HR1: Live Webinar

Join the **National Alliance for Caregiving** for a webinar where we dive into the political realities of the HR1 Bill through a caregiving lens.

How are states navigating its implementation and new mandates? [Register](#) to learn more.

A graphic for a live webinar. On the left, it features the logos for 'NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR CAREGIVING' and 'CAREGIVER NATION COALITION'. Below the logos, the text reads: 'LIVE WEBINAR', 'The New Landscape: HR1 and What's at Stake for Family Caregivers', 'REGISTER HERE TO JOIN US', 'FEBRUARY 26, 2026', and '2:00PM - 3:15PM ET'. On the right, there is a photograph of a young boy in a wheelchair being embraced by a young girl.

**NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR CAREGIVING** **CAREGIVER NATION COALITION**

**LIVE WEBINAR**  
**The New Landscape:  
HR1 and What's at Stake for  
Family Caregivers**

REGISTER HERE TO JOIN US  
FEBRUARY 26, 2026  
2:00PM - 3:15PM ET

February

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## Rare Disease Day

Rare Disease Day is a reminder that behind every rare diagnosis is a family caregiver fighting for answers, access, and hope.

**STAFF SPOTLIGHTS**

## Celebrating One Year of Adali Hernandez

Please join us in congratulating **Adali Hernandez**, our Senior Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations, on his one-year work anniversary.

In his first year, Adali has made a profound impact—building critical partnerships and strengthening our foundation with skill and strategic vision. His work expands our capacity to serve caregivers every day. Congratulations, Adali. We are proud to have you on this team.



## NAC's Yadira Montoya Joins Patient Advisory Council

We are proud to announce that **Yadira Montoya**, our Director of Programs, has been selected for the **Patient Advisory Council at the Center for Innovation & Value Research**. Her expertise will help ensure health technology assessment truly reflects the lived realities of patients and the families who care for them.

## NAC Research Informs National Family Caregiving Strategy

Last month, NAC's Senior Research Manager, **Dr. George Kueppers**, addressed the RAISE and Grandfamilies advisory councils, presenting our latest research to inform updates to the **National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers**. We thank ACL for ensuring national policy is grounded in the realities of the **63 million family caregivers** we represent.

## Jason Resendez Moderates Plenary at LiveOn NY Leadership Summit

Last week, NAC CEO and President **Jason Resendez** moderated a plenary session at the **LiveOn NY Age Strong New York Leadership Summit**, where he joined leaders from FPWA, Justice in Aging, and Healthspieren to discuss the federal policy shifts shaping aging and caregiving in the year ahead.

## CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Connect with NAC on social media to get the latest updates on our policy & advocacy efforts, research, and events.



Join our online community to support and uplift family caregivers nationwide.



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National Alliance for Caregiving | 1730 Rhode Island Ave. NW Suite 812 | Washington, DC 20036  
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