



# Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS): A Critical Source of Respite Care

## Medicaid Makes Care Possible

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63 million family caregivers receive  
respite services.

*National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, Caregiving in the U.S. 2025*

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*National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, Caregiving in the U.S. 2025*



### Caregiving is a Demanding Job. Respite Helps Caregivers Recharge, Refresh, and Rest.

Respite is planned or emergency care provided to an adult or child with disabilities to offer temporary relief to family caregivers.<sup>1</sup> Medicaid, our nation's primary payer of long-term care services, offers direct and indirect services to family caregivers under its Home- and Community-Based Waiver Services (HCBS) program. Medicaid's HCBS program is an essential provider of respite care.

Respite care offers concrete benefits to the family caregiver and the person who needs care, allowing for more cost-effective, higher-quality care. Respite care has shown to have a positive impact on caregiver health outcomes and the caregiver-recipient relationship including:

- Relief of Caregiving Hardship
- Improved Well-Being for Patients and Caregivers
- Improved Family Relationships



Having outside caregivers has been really helpful. We've been able to have weekends away where we have a caregiver we really trust who stays here, with our daughter, at our house, that allows her to stay in her routine.

- Family Caregiver Rona | Oklahoma

### Despite its benefits, many caregivers lack access to respite care when they need it:<sup>2</sup>

- Only 13% of America's 63 million family caregivers receive respite services, while 39% report that it would be helpful.
- Respite is especially critical for those caring for someone with a memory problem like dementia or a condition that involves emotional or mental health issues.

<sup>1</sup>What is Respite? ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center, <https://archrespite.org/> (last visited 4/9/2025).

<sup>2</sup> National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, Caregiving in the U.S. 2025, <https://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Final-2025-CGUS-Report.pdf>.