

# How Families and Work Institute Can Help...



Employers



Caregivers



Mature Workers

Families and Work Institute has published an **online workplace toolkit** to help concerned employers support their mature and caregiving employees succeed. The toolkit provides free, practical and high-quality information on therapeutic nutrition options and other care-related resources that can easily be integrated into wellness and other employee support programs. These care-related resources can influence how quickly working caregivers and employees recovering from or managing an illness return to work. The goal is to help employees better cope with today's working, caregiving and aging realities through an increased focus on therapeutic nutrition.

Access the complete online toolkit at:  
[www.familiesandwork.org/nutrition-toolkit](http://www.familiesandwork.org/nutrition-toolkit).

Families and Work Institute's therapeutic nutrition toolkit was made possible with the generous support of Abbott with special thanks to Corporate Voices for Working Families.

For more information about Families and Work Institute, please visit [www.familiesandwork.org](http://www.familiesandwork.org).

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# Employer Support for Caregivers & Mature Workers

*Through a New Focus on Therapeutic Nutrition*



## Working Families are Our Nation's Primary Caregivers

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[www.familiesandwork.org/nutrition-toolkit](http://www.familiesandwork.org/nutrition-toolkit)



Families and Work Institute



## Working Families are Our Nation's Primary Caregivers

Today's American families are the primary providers of long-term care in their own homes and communities, with 61% of homebound older adults depending on family caregivers.<sup>1</sup> This is an important issue for employers today, because two-thirds of these family caregivers also work.<sup>2</sup> According to Families and Work Institute's 2008 National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW), employed caregivers are also working as many hours a week on average (45 hours) as employed persons without eldercare responsibilities.

And it is not just women who are caregivers. Combining full-time work and eldercare is becoming much more common for men, with 20% of men and 22% of women reporting that they have provided elder care.

### Family Caregiving Comes at a Cost

The value of the "free" services that family caregivers provide caring for older adults or adults with other limitations is estimated to approach \$450 billion annually—more than twice as much as is spent on homecare and nursing home services combined.<sup>3</sup>

Caregiving comes at a cost to employees. In addition to the emotional and physical toll it takes to care for an older adult or loved one, there are clear economic costs. Workers are often concerned about the impact of caregiving on their jobs and opportunities for advancement, while their duties at home often require them to spend their own resources to help care for their family member(s). On average, caregiving costs each employee an estimated \$12,348 a year.<sup>4</sup>

Caregiving costs employers, too. By one estimate, U.S. businesses with employee caregivers suffer \$33 billion in productivity losses annually.<sup>5</sup>

## Therapeutic Nutrition Can Benefit Employer Caregiver Programs

Many employers are now recognizing the spectrum of workplace-related issues associated with caregiving and are beginning to act. Some 33% of large employers nationwide now offer some kind of eldercare program to support employees with caregiving responsibilities.<sup>6</sup>

According to Families and Work Institute's 2012 National Study of Employers, 41% of employers provide information about services for elder family members (Elder Care Resource and Referral), and 75% of employers provide time off for employees to provide eldercare without jeopardy to their jobs.

Despite this increased awareness, what is often missing in employer programs for caregivers and mature workers is a **focus on nutrition**. Yet, nutrition significantly impacts a range of health outcomes for older adults, and therefore ultimately influences how quickly mature workers and caregiving employees can get back to work.

- Good nutrition has been documented to lead to a reduction of up to 56% in overall complications, like infections.<sup>7</sup>
- Good nutrition can lead to a reduction of up to 50% in avoidable hospital readmissions.<sup>8</sup>



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5. The MetLife Caregiving Cost Study: Productivity Losses to U.S. Business. MetLife Foundation, July 2006. <http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/mmi-caregiver-cost-study-productivity.pdf>

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