

FROM THE CHAMPS PARISH NURSE

Being a Care Provider Isn't Easy

Facts about Chronic Illnesses

As you read the following data consider the future impact on the health care system and individuals who provide care in the home environment as our aging population continues to expand and the number requiring daily care rises. In 2000 the statistics indicated that 88% of persons over 65 have at least one chronic health condition and 21% of persons 65 and older have a chronic disability. *Source: NIA*

- Did you know that more than 50 million people are involved in caring for a friend or relative in the U.S. who has a chronic illness, disabled or aged? *Source: U.S. Dept. Health and Human Services, 2000.*
- The typical family caregiver is a 46-year-old woman caring for her widowed mother who does not live with her. She is married and employed. Approximately **60%** of family caregivers are women. *Source: National Alliance for Care giving and AARP, Care giving in the U.S., 2004.*
- **1.4 million Children** ages 8 to 18 provide care for an adult relative; **72%** are caring for a parent or grandparent. Fortunately, most are not the sole caregiver. *Source: National Alliance for Care giving and the United Hospital Fund, Young Caregivers in the U.S., 2005.*
- **30%** of family caregivers caring for seniors are themselves aged 65 or over; another **15%** are between the ages of 45 to 54. *Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Characteristics of Long-term Care Users. Rockville: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2001.*
- **17%** of family caregivers are providing **40 hours** of care a week or more. *Source: National Alliance for Care giving and AARP, Care giving in the U.S., 2004.*
- The value of the services family caregivers provide for “free” is estimated to be **\$306 billion** a year. That is almost **twice as much** as is actually spent on homecare and nursing home services combined (\$158 billion). *Source: Arnos, Peter S., “Economic Value of Informal Care giving,” presented at the Care Coordination and the Care giving Forum, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, NIH, Bethesda, MD, and January 25-27, 2006.*
- The need for family caregivers will increase in the years ahead. People over 65 are expected to **increase at a 2.3% rate**, but the number of family members available to care for them will only increase at a 0.8% rate. *Source: Mack, Katherine and Thompson, Lee with Robert Friedland. Data Profiles, Family Caregivers of Older Persons: Adult Children. The Center on an Aging Society, Georgetown University, page 2, May 2001.*
- “Women who are family caregivers are **2.5 times** more likely than non-caregivers to live in poverty and **five times** more likely to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI).” *Source: Study conducted by researchers at Rice University and data compiled from the Health and Retirement Study funded by the National Institute of Aging and conducted by the University of Michigan, 1992-2004.*

- In 2000 typical working family caregiver **lost \$109 per day in wages** and health benefits due to the need to provide full time care at home. *Source: Stucki, B.R. and Mulvey, J., "Can Aging Baby Boomers Avoid the Nursing Home? Long-term Care Insurance for Aging in Place." American Council of Life Insurers, March 2000.*
- Family caregivers who provide care 36 or more hours weekly are more likely than non-caregivers to experience symptoms of depression or anxiety. For spouses the rate is **six times higher**; for those caring for a parent the rate is twice as high. *Source: Cannuscio, C.C., C. Jones, I. Kawachi, G.A. Colditz, L. Berkman and E. Rimm, Reverberation of family illness: A longitudinal assessment of informal caregiver and mental health status in the nurses' health study. American Journal of Public Health 92:305-1311, 2002.*
- A wife's hospitalization increased her husband's **chances of dying** within a month by 35%. A husband's hospitalization boosted his wife's **mortality risk by 44%**. *Source: Nicholas D. Christakis, Professor, Health-care Policy, Harvard Medical School, Boston and Suzanne Salamon, M.D., Associate Chief, Geriatric Psychiatry, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital, Boston, New England Journal of Medicine*
- Family caregivers experiencing extreme stress have been shown to age prematurely. This level of stress can take as much as **10 years off a family caregiver's life**. *Source: Arno, Peter S., "Economic Value of Informal Caregiving," presented at the Care Coordination and the Caregiving Forum, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, NIH, Bethesda, MD, January 25-27, 2006.*
- **59%** of family caregivers who care for someone over the age of 18 either work or have worked while providing care. And **62%** have had to make some adjustments to their work life, from reporting late to work to giving up work entirely. *Source: National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, Caregiving in the U.S., 2004.*
- **37% of human resource directors** did not feel that their organizations made a real and ongoing effort to inform employees of available assistance for managing work and family responsibilities. *Source: Galinsky, E. and Bond, J.T., The 1998 Business Work-Life Study. New York: Families and Work Institute, 1998.*
- Women average **14 years** out of the paid labor force, primarily because of caregiving responsibilities. *Source: Maatz, Lisa, President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security. Older Women's League, August 2001.*
- In Nebraska in 2004 there were 170, 972 individuals providing care for a family or friend. The annual market value (millions of dollars): \$1,817.

Do you ever wonder, how many of the individuals with a chronic illnesses could have prevented or at least delayed the onset of a disease or disorder by simply exercising regularly, eating healthy and living sensibly? We actually do make a difference in our health by the choices we make for a healthy lifestyle!

Champs
Center for Healthy Aging, Ministries, Programs & Services
13271 Millard Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska 68137
Tel: (402) 895-2224
Website: www.champsonline.info
Email: champs@crossandheart.org

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