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Businesses Benefit with Policies That Support Employee Caregivers

AARP and ReACT report shows financial and productivity benefits when companies help their employees who are family caregivers

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Companies that offer flextime and telecommuting policies to help their employees better manage family caregiving responsibilities see productivity increase and a financial return on investment (ROI), according to a new report by AARP and Respect a Caregiver's Time (ReACT). "**Determining the Return on Investment: Supportive Policies for Employee Caregivers**" finds that businesses offering flextime and telecommuting schedules saw a ROI between \$1.70–\$4.45 for every dollar invested in these policies.

The number of employees providing care for a loved one with an age-related chronic condition is a significant and growing issue within the workplace. Approximately 60% of the nation's 40 million family caregivers providing unpaid care to adults are employed full- or part-time. Of these, 1 in 4 is a millennial working 34.9 hours per week. As a result, most employers have family caregivers in the workplace and need to find ways to retain these valuable employees and support them in meeting their professional and personal responsibilities. Even as employers increasingly recognize this need, a lack of research on the issue has made it difficult for companies to identify and assess policies to support employee caregivers and reduce associated costs.

"This first-of-its-kind report builds a compelling and much-needed case for workplace policies that allow employees to better manage their caregiving responsibilities," said **Nancy LeMond, Chief Advocacy & Engagement Officer at AARP**. "We now have evidence of direct, tangible benefits for businesses that have policies that support their employee caregivers. It comes at a time when business leaders, employees, and researchers are searching for approaches that can help support their employees who also provide elder care, which is set to grow dramatically with an aging population."

The report evaluates the results of peer-reviewed studies and reports from industry associations and government agencies to determine the costs and benefits of employer policies that support caregivers. This analysis examines policies, including flextime and telecommuting, and measures related to improvements in absenteeism, retention, productivity, and recruitment, as well as the policies' associated costs.

The report is intended to establish a baseline in a larger effort to transform the working environment for caregivers. The authors believe that the report will promote a national dialogue on caregiving, and lead to innovations that change how businesses approach the issue. The report's findings indicate significant incentives for companies to invest in the identification of their employee caregivers, the implementation of supportive policies, and ongoing policy adjustment to better meet their workforce's specific needs.

"We believe that the report will serve as a stepping stone and guide to further conversations and company-level policy changes that make a significant positive impact in the lives of caregivers nationwide," said Drew Holzapfel, convener of ReACT. "Although the findings themselves are promising, they also indicate the need for additional work in the area. We must find partners that can perform further tests of the ROI of a range of caregiver support policies, and develop tools to help businesses navigate this increasingly important issue."

AARP and ReACT plan to follow the report with materials that draw attention to the prevalence and needs of employee caregivers, and equip employers with actionable insights to guide a proactive response. It is expected that future work on elder care will include a network of partners to further test the ROI of support policies, a customizable ROI calculator, and a review of best practices.

For more information about caregiving, please visit www.aarp.org/caregiving.

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Caregiving Resources:

- **Valuing the Invaluable: 2015 Update**
- **Caregiving in the US: 2015**
- **Home Alone: Family Caregivers Providing Complex Chronic Care** (October 2012)
- **ABA/AARP Checklist for Family Caregivers: A Guide to Making It Manageable** (2015)
- **Amy Goyer's ABA/AARP Juggling Life, Work and Caregiving** (2015)

About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into 'Real Possibilities' by changing the way America defines aging. With staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and promote the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare security, financial security and personal fulfillment. AARP also advocates for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the world's largest circulation magazine, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @aarp and our CEO @JoAnn_Jenkins on Twitter.

About ReACT

ReACT is an employer-focused coalition dedicated to addressing the challenges faced by employee caregivers and reducing the impact on the companies that employ them. ReACT represents nearly 1 million employees through its membership of more than 40 companies and non-profit organizations. For more information, visit www.RespectCaregivers.org.

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