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AARP Report Finds High Caregiver Interest in Using Technology But Low Usage Due to Lack of Viable Options and Time Challenges

Top Needs Include Prescription Management, Home Safety and Health Assessment; Key Opportunity for Innovative Companies to Offer Better Solutions

WASHINGTON, D.C. and SAN FRANCISCO — At its [Health Innovation@50+ event](#) today, AARP issued a *Caregivers and Technology: What they Want and Need study* aimed at identifying technology interest and usage among America's 40 million unpaid family caregivers. The research found that caregivers have a high interest in using technology to care for their loved ones. 71 percent of survey participants expressed interest in using technology to support caregiving activities while less than ten percent have currently or previously used a caregiving technology.

"This research shows caregivers are seeking technologies that can bring them peace of mind," said Jody Holtzman, senior vice president, Market Innovation, AARP. "But they are not aware of existing solutions that meet their needs or they perceive the options to be overly costly or complex to use. This presents an opportunity for the technology industry to provide viable alternatives to the 40 million caregivers actively looking for ways to lessen their workload."

This research was conducted by HITLAB in partnership with Project Catalyst, a program that aims to fill a gap in the market by encouraging tech developers to put 50-plus consumers at the center of innovation. Founding members of Project Catalyst include AARP, Pfizer, UnitedHealthcare, Medstar Health, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

"Family caregivers are the unsung heroes of our healthcare system, and supporting them is a tremendous challenge for our society as the Boomer generation ages," said Steve Nelson, CEO, UnitedHealthcare's Medicare business, a founding member of Project Catalyst. "This study reinforces the existence of two noteworthy trends: Caregivers are increasingly enthusiastic about technologies that make caring for others easier and, secondly, there's near-endless opportunity for entrepreneurs to develop products and tools that serve the burgeoning caregiving marketplace, which will soon eclipse \$70 billion a year."

Medication management is a top priority for caregivers. The **top five areas of interest** as ranked by survey participants include:

1. Refilling and picking up prescriptions
2. Making and supervising medical appointments
3. Assessing health needs and conditions
4. Ensuring home safety
5. Monitoring Rx adherence

"Technology has tremendous potential to help the growing number of informal caregivers coordinate and monitor their loved ones' care needs at home, and to support the critical role that caregivers play," said Mark S. Smith, MD, MedStar Health chief innovation officer, and director of MedStar Institute for Innovation. "With the aging population growing and health care increasingly moving into the home – where people want to remain – these caregivers have never been more essential. We are pleased to support AARP's Project Catalyst, which can spur the conversation around how to leverage technology to enable the highest levels of life quality and dignity for all Americans."

Key findings were that trust is one of the key barriers to hiring home aides via online sources and that solutions are needed that can help caregivers coordinate tasks and disseminate information amongst the circle of care. Overall, the study identifies strong opportunities for technology innovators to create solutions to help alleviate the stress and workload of unpaid family caregivers.

This research reinforces findings in AARP's Jan. 2016 *Caregiving Innovation Frontiers study* which highlighted how 117 million Americans are expected to need assistance of some kind by 2020, yet the overall number of caregivers is only expected to reach 45 million. It also details how this market is set to grow thirteen percent over the next four years, resulting in an aggregated revenue opportunity of \$279 billion, with six key areas identified as business opportunities, including technology for essential daily activities and health and safety awareness.

The Caregivers and Technology: What they Want and Need study is available for download at the Project Catalyst page: www.aarp.org/projectcatalyst

For more information about AARP's technology innovation initiatives, please visit: <http://www.aarp.org/technology/innovations/innovation-50-plus/>

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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 Project Catalyst

Project Catalyst fills a gap in the market by putting the 50-plus consumer at the center of innovation. By conducting consumer research of new and emerging products with the 50-plus consumer, we help inform developers about how their products and services are working to improve the lives of Americans as they age. Founding partners include AARP, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, MedStar Health, Pfizer and UnitedHealthcare.

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