

# Family Living

## Long Distance Elderly care growing

The number of boomers who provide long-distance care is expected to double in 15 years. Long-distance caregivers miss approximately 15 million days of work annually.

A survey suggests a growing market for private businesses and the voluntary sector.

Nearly 7 million Americans provide care or manage care for a relative or friend aged 55 or older who lives at least one hour away, according to a survey cosponsored by The National Council on the Aging (NCOA) and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The survey is the first to focus exclusively on long-distance caregiving.

The caregivers in the survey lived, on average, 304 miles away from the care recipient and spent an average of four hours traveling to reach that person. Those respondents who were

the primary caregivers for the older person spent an average of 35 hours per month giving care — roughly the equivalent of one week of work each month. One-quarter of all the respondents spent more than 41 hours per month providing care.

Long-distance care is a large and growing concern to baby boomers. The average age of the caregivers interviewed was 46, and nearly half of them were boomers. The survey indicates that approximately 3.3 million boomers are providing long-distance care.

"We expect that the number of long-distance caregivers will more than double over the next 15 years as the baby boomers and their parents age," said James Firman, Ed.D., president and CEO of NCOA.

"To deal with this growing phenomenon, employers, consumers, and government will need to foster bet-

ter ways of helping the caregiver and receiver."

The average care recipient was 78 years old, and 64 percent were women. The care recipient was typically a relative: 53 percent were parents or step-parents of the caregiver; 11 percent were grandparents.

"The survey reveals that long-distance caregiving in America is a family affair," said Donna Wagner, Ph.D., vice president for research and development at NCOA. "Most of the caregivers in the study were able to manage their caregiving responsibilities because of the help they received from family and friends. The results demonstrate that policies and programs that help long-distance caregivers benefit not only care recipients but the entire family unit."

As long-distance caregiving

grows along with the aging of boomers and their parents, employers in the U.S. may face serious employee leave and productivity issues as a result. More than half of all the respondents said their responsibilities interfere with their professional, social, or family needs.

Among the employed respondents, 25 percent said they miss at least one day of work in a typical month because of their caregiving, and 15 percent said they had taken unpaid leave during the past year. NCOA estimates that at least 15 million days of work are missed each year because of long-distance caregiving.

Despite the toll that caregiving takes on their personal lives, however, the overwhelming majority of respondents said they plan to continue providing the care indefinitely.

## Long-distance care opportunities

Given their burdens, long-distance caregivers could benefit from many different forms of assistance. Caregivers report that the greatest unmet needs of the care recipients are for personal care and assistance, companionship, help in coping with an illness, and more family contact.

More than 70 percent of the caregivers reported that they would benefit from educational materials about services, and 62 percent said that they would like someone to visit the person and update the caregiver about the recipient's mental and physical health.

"The survey findings confirm a sizeable and growing market for services for elderly people," said Carolyn Asbury, Ph.D., director of the health and human services program at The Pew Charitable Trusts. "Private businesses and the voluntary sector have important opportunities to respond to this emerging market."

More than half of the survey respondents are already receiving help from formal service providers — often a home health agency or individual.

The survey also suggests that churches and synagogues could be particularly helpful resources for long-distance caregivers. Among care recipients who were affiliated with a faith congregation, 76 percent received some form of help from the congregation.

More than 90 percent of the

caregivers whose family member or friend had received help from the congregation said they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with this help, and 65 percent of these caregivers said they would like to have or would consider arranging for help from a congregation other than their own or the care recipient's.

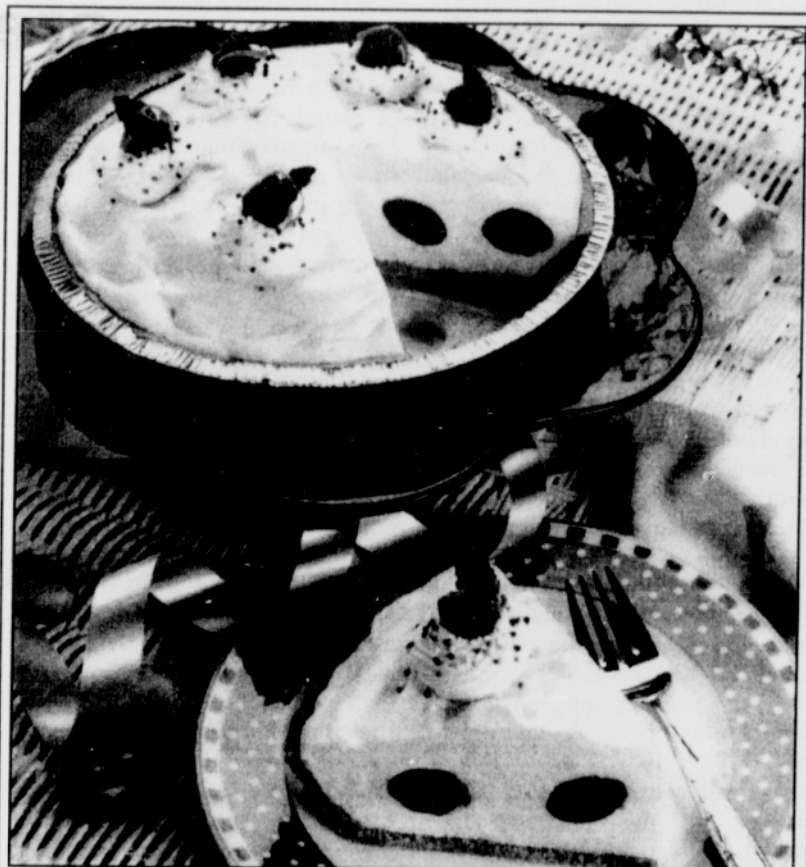
In the survey, caregiving was considered "long-distance" if it required travel of at least one hour to reach the care recipient.

Caregiving was defined as providing or managing care, services, or financial or legal assistance for a person aged 55 or older.

Two hundred respondents were identified as long-distance caregivers and were interviewed in a telephone survey. Respondents were screened from a sample of nearly 1,000 adults representative of the U.S. population.

The National Council on the Aging is a private, nonprofit association of more than 7,500 organizations and professionals in the U.S. who work with and on behalf of older persons.

The Pew Charitable Trusts, a national philanthropy with over \$4 billion in assets, support nonprofit activities in the areas of health and human services, culture, education, the environment, public policy, and religion. Through their grant-making in aging, the Trusts seek to promote the ability of elderly people to live independently in their communities.



Welcome in Spring with this Easter Hunt Pie. With miniature chocolate eggs hidden throughout the filling, it's a delicious surprise for those who prefer to do their egg hunting with a fork while seated at the dinner table. This no-bake, cheesecake-flavored pie has a silky-smooth filling featuring Eagle® Brand Sweetened Condensed Milk and is easy to prepare with Keebler® Ready Crust® Graham Cracker Pie Crust.

## Wallet returned after thirty years

Thirty years after he lost his wallet, Allen Bradley got it back - with interest.

Bradley hadn't seen his tan wallet, containing \$78, since he was 17. Last week, it came in the mail, with \$200 and a note of apology.

"Everything is still in your wallet like it was when I found it," wrote Ernie Putt of Chesapeake, Va. "I realize that the little extra I'm sending will not correct my misdeed, but it may help."

Still inside were a 1967 Elvis Presley calendar, old photographs of girlfriends Bradley no longer remembers, a receipt for the 1965 Mustang he rented for his high school

prom, even a 30-year-old condom.

Putt was traveling with his family when he found the wallet in a phone booth in New Castle, Del.

"It seemed like a godsend," Putt's wife, Doris, said. "At the time, we had six children and were on our way to visit their grandparents in Philadelphia and we were short on money."

Putt felt bad about taking the money, and, earlier this year, he tracked down Bradley through the Florida Division of Motor Vehicles.

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## House passes two pro-family bills

"The House of Representatives has made great strides this week in the battle to preserve American families," Family Research Council Director of Communications Kristi Hamrick said Thursday.

"They have passed legislation to allow parents working in the private sector the flexibility to adjust their schedule without having

to sacrifice their income (The Working Families Flexibility Act) and also passed by an overwhelming majority the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban which protects the life of the partially-born baby and the life and health of the mother."

Mrs. Hamrick made her statements as the U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass (295 to

136) the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

Hamrick continued, "Families across America will be strengthened by having more quality time together, and women and children in these families will be saved from the emotional, physical, and spiritual destruction of infanticide-on-demand."



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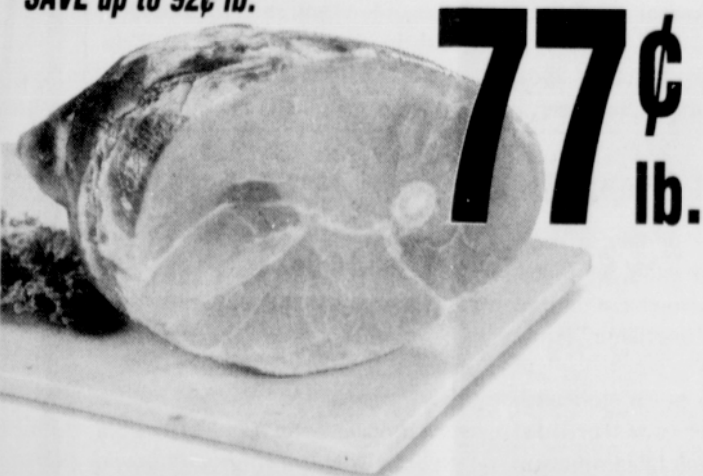
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