



## **The New Juggling Act: Work and Caregiving, Coping with Double Demands**

**Subject:** The New Juggling Act: Work and Caregiving, Coping with Double Demands

Hi CCC Members-

I thought that the following information and bylined article might be useful to you and your readers who are struggling to balance caregiving and their careers.

According to a national study conducted by MetLife and AARP, employees caring for family members aged 50 or older are widespread and increasing. In addition to their caregiving responsibilities, about 64 percent of these family caregivers are employed, creating a 'juggling' act between work and caregiving.

Unfortunately, most family caregivers often underestimate the time required for caregiving and the impact of their obligation on their work. A caregiver's career can reach a standstill, his/her wages can be depleted, and the caregiver's health can be compromised. The employer of the caregiver also can suffer a substantial amount of economic loss.

My experience with Comfort Keepers, a non-medical in-home care service, includes several years of experience dealing with family caregivers and what solutions are available to them.

The included bylined article describes the types of difficulties a family caregiver can experience both at the office and at home. I have also provided a list of options available to the caregiver when attempting to balance caregiving and a career. Family caregivers should know there is help.

I would be happy to discuss this information with you further and/or provide you with additional information on the senior care industry. Please contact me at 323-932-9777 or [parklabrea@comfortkeepers](mailto:parklabrea@comfortkeepers).

Best Regards,

Bill Cardenas

## **The New Juggling Act: Work and Caregiving, Coping With Double Demands** *Utilizing Caregiving Options Provides Much Needed Support*

By Bill Cardenas

Caring for an aging parent is never an easy task, but this task is made much more difficult when trying to juggle caregiving with a career. Family members are often forced to choose between one and the other: "Do I go to my 3 o'clock meeting or take my mother to the doctor?" Managing both these tasks can often increase stress while decreasing your capabilities on one or both of these.

According to a national study conducted by MetLife and AARP, employees caring for family members aged 50 or older are widespread and increasing. Nearly 25 percent of all households have at least one adult who has provided care for an elderly person in the last 12 months. In addition to their caregiving responsibilities, about 64 percent of these family caregivers are employed, creating a 'juggling' act between work and caregiving.

Unfortunately, most family caregivers often underestimate the time required for caregiving and the impact of their obligation on their work. Listed below are some of the effects caregiving can have on employee relations in the workplace, along with suggested solutions:

### **PROBLEMS EMPLOYED FAMILY CAREGIVERS FACE:**

- *Career Stands Still*  
Responsibilities at home can mean missing out on promotions and training at work, opportunities for job transfers or relocations, and acquiring and keeping up with necessary job skills.
- *Loss in Wages*  
Income can drastically be cut as a result of caregiving obligations. In the national MetLife and AARP study, nearly two-thirds of respondents said that caregiving had a direct impact on their earnings. As a result of caregiving, the average loss in aggregate lost wages, Social Security and lost pension benefits reported was \$659,139 over a lifetime.
- *Reductions in Savings and Spending*  
Caregiving for a loved one can cause significant limitations to personal savings and spending, home improvements, vacations, and/or investments.
- *Toll on Health*  
Caregiving responsibilities can often take a toll on the health of a family caregiver leading to increases in absenteeism in the workplace, early retirement, and job turnover. This can lead to a loss in employee productivity and overall workplace morale.
- *Economic Loss for Employers*  
Employers also lose money due to employees' caregiving responsibilities. A previous MetLife study estimated that absenteeism, partial absenteeism, workday interruptions, eldercare crises, and costs associated with supervising employed caregivers conservatively averages \$11.4 billion per year.

### **SOLUTIONS FOR EMPLOYED CAREGIVERS:**

- *Employee Assistance Programs*  
A growing trend in caregiving options that employers around the country are embracing to help employees out at work is the Work Options Group (WOG), a national employee assistance program that allies itself with centers and caregiving agencies to provide backup care in case of an emergency.

In order to alleviate this problem, major corporations often offer WOG to their employees in order to keep down the number of absentees due to caregiving. As soon as an employee

realizes they are in need of backup care for a child or senior, they call the national WOG hotline to arrange for a local caregiver to come to the home, allowing the employee to go to work. Employed caregivers should contact their human resources department to determine if this support program is already available or perhaps a program their company should look into.

- *National Caregiving Agencies*

A second solution for caregiving support is to hire a national caregiving agency, such as Comfort Keepers. Comfort Keepers provides in-home non-medical care at a fraction of the cost of moving into an assisted living facility or nursing home. Services offered included companionship, meal preparation, light housekeeping, grocery and errand services, incidental transportation, personal care assistance, and more. Best of all, Comfort Keepers is available 24/7, catering to an employee's varied work schedules. All Comfort Keepers caregivers are also fully screened through credit and criminal background checks and are fully insured and bonded.

While there is no one solution to the caregiving epidemic in the workplace, these steps can help workers balance their career and their caregiving responsibilities while alleviating stress for both the family caregiver and the person being cared for. Make sure you understand the available options and utilize all the resources available in Los Angeles.

### About Comfort Keepers®

*Comfort Keepers provides non-medical, in-home companion care on an hourly, daily, weekly or live-in basis for individuals needing assistance with activities of daily living. Services are tailored to the individual needs of each client and, in the case of seniors, allow them to continue living safely and in the privacy of their own home. Care duties include companionship, meal preparation, light housekeeping, grocery shopping, transportation for errands and appointments, laundry, recreational activities and more. Comfort Keepers has over 550 independently owned and operated offices worldwide in the U.S. states, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Singapore and Portugal. For more information, visit [www.comfortkeepers.com](http://www.comfortkeepers.com).*

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