

The Infrastructure for Caregiving Does Not Exist: Employers Can Make a Difference

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Our backyard crowd meets for lunch on Tuesday.

Mike is a few minutes late as he took a call from an agency he hopes will finally have someone they can hire to help with his dad. It's been over three months, and they are still waiting due to the staff shortages of professional caregivers. The conversation continues.



Since COVID-19, awareness of the aging caregiving crisis has heightened business innovation.

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Employees want to keep their jobs, income, & relationships. Work disrupted by unexpected caregiving demands leads to peer needs being second to caregivers, especially for performance on team outcomes.”

Jeannette Galvanek, Founder and CEO, CareWise Solutions

Many entrepreneurs are entering this emerging market, and most are using a model from the past that suggests that this role is short-term and there are adequate resources to support employee-caregivers and caregivers in general. The raw truth is that no organized aging baby boomer caregiving structure exists. Improvisation is happening, not necessarily addressing the root cause. Employers need healthy, happy, productive, and motivated people to run the business. Employers face a [tremendous threat to their workforce continuity](#).

As the new workforce majority is challenged by caregiving, we must look at the indirect impact of the healthcare-at-home crisis. Every caregiver works with 5-10 others, and

the issues become contagious. Team leaders are ill-equipped to provide business advice and counsel. They aren't sure what is okay to say or how to deal with the spillover of caregiving stress into their work environment.

The scope and scale of 70 million aging baby boomers have impacted every workplace. The med tech and healthcare-to-home movement is driving the trajectory of employment protection down, employers' investments in skills are being lost, and long-term caregiving removes employees from the workforce, especially lower wage roles and in underserved communities. Efforts to build the skills for the future will start at a reduced organizational intelligence level.

There is just [no infrastructure to support families or the workforce](#). It just doesn't exist! Tom, Mike, Sandy, and Nancy have had the same experience, spending hours looking for resources. Mike said, "The resources that do exist are well hidden or tell us we need to deal with the problem, accept it as normal or deal with our feelings and behavior – like a stress management tool for me is somehow the key to getting my dad the care he needs and making it so my brothers and I can still work! We need to build it!"

This is a massive transformational period. Leaders just need to accept that the Aging Caregiving System is not broken - it doesn't exist! That's good news. Collectively, American organizations can build the values and goals for successful living, working, and caring with effective management systems and a skilled and satisfied community and home care workforce.

The redeployment of family caregivers from employment in their job of choice doesn't seem to be a smart labor strategy. We are at a turning point. Employers and employees must consider



The Caring Place HUB App



Jeannette Galvanek, Founder, CareWise Solutions

the currently defined aging caregiving role as antiquated. They have a decision to make.

Many hope that this is wrong, ignore labor issues, profitability challenges, and stay neutral. Absorb the cost of care-related disabilities as illnesses, accept less productivity, and ignore the bottom-line impact of increasing successful litigation, team member dissatisfaction, and customer satisfaction. OR Take an active role equipping employees to be caring families with wellness, work and care education, life planning supports, and access to the right resources. Reclassify caregiving and employment challenges as distinct issues. Rethink employees' long-term needs for benefits. Establish business performance standards to measure outcomes building a healthy, high-performing, and caring climate as organization development.

The preponderance of caregiving products and services available to companies and individual caregivers focuses on helping people become better caregivers, not maintaining their careers. Employers trying to support caregivers on their teams tend to take one of two approaches.

Employer Approach #1: "Our aim is to ensure employees feel that our company supports their work/life balance. We offer great policies that permit employees flexibility to be at home and provide care and 12-week leaves of absence. Our EAP includes a wellness program and mental health support."

Employer Approach #2: "We aim to support employees' interests in retaining their health, jobs, income, and careers, and the ability to be there when their family needs them. We provide work and care management education to all team members, emphasizing proactive planning and simplifying access to hundreds of resources. Our managers are equipped with new skills as we build an operating climate supporting good health, high performance, and sensitivity to the extreme challenges of caregiving."

The Difference Between Approaches - Since our society sees caring for aging parents as a "family" or "personal" problem, solutions are single points of intervention such as case management, employee assistance, and wellness apps. The stress and burnout of an average of 5 ½ years as a caregiver needs a workforce growth strategy across every industry, building, corporate/employee longevity and building the skills needed for mutual success. Connectivity and integration are lacking for family-focused outcomes, cost savings, and quality of life for those needing care. Cross-functional technology and cross-industry collaboration is needed.

Approach #1 is designed to make employees better caregivers at the expense of their careers and the stability of the organization's workforce – indeed, the nation's workforce. A common comment from executives is, 'I never thought of it like that.' C-Suite executives, even those who have been caregivers to aging parents themselves, seldom consider the broader impact on their workforce. They measure caregiving program effectiveness and short-term employee satisfaction, but there is a massive employment issue that must be addressed.

Carewise Solutions is currently welcoming a million lives into the community using this unique approach, yet, the organization advocates for a change in the perception of the caregiving crisis to a workforce crisis. Mike, Tom, Sandy, and Nancy have created a Tuesday evening group of business leaders who are learning about each other's work. They discover how they can support other employers in advocating for the quality of life, work and care in our nation... to preserve employment in an aging society. These [discussions with expert guidance are now open to other executives](#).

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