



The N.C. Coalition on Aging

2015 Priority Issue

Support Family Caregivers

Issue:

Supporting family caregivers of the growing older population in our state who prefer services to stay in their homes prevents or delays care options that are more costly to the State.

The Coalition's Position:

To meet the growing demand for in-home services and support for family caregivers, the North Carolina Coalition on Aging recommends:



Allowing all employees to use existing sick leave benefits for caregiving purposes.



Allowing all employees to take short increments of unpaid leave for a family member's illness, injury, or medical appointment.



Appropriate funding to increase the availability of respite care services, which provide short periods of relief for family members from their on-going caregiving tasks.

Background Facts:

- Sixty North Carolina counties have more people age 60 and older than ages 0–17. This number will increase to 90 counties by 2025.
- Approximately 25% of North Carolina's 1.4 million older adults over the age of 65 have two or more physical or mental conditions that make it difficult to do activities required to remain independent.
- There are 1.73 million family caregivers providing care to an adult with limitations in daily activities at least some time during the year. This caregiving can often be a 24/7 undertaking, especially when caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease.
- The value of unpaid care in North Carolina is \$11.7 billion.
- Caregiving can become more complex when it is long-distance care as well as when legal procedures such as guardianship are involved.
- The caregiver support ratio (the number of potential caregivers age 45-64 for each person 80 or older) will decline from 8.0 in 2010 to 3.9 in 2030.
- More than 60% of all family caregivers work.
- Over 75% of caregivers in North Carolina report that they have to make adjustments to their work schedules and 15% say they have to give up work entirely in order to care for their relatives.



- Workplace policies that support and accommodate working caregivers show business benefits including enhanced employee productivity, lower absenteeism and reduced costs.
- Approximately 70% of caregivers in NC support additional funding for home and community based services even if it meant an increase in taxes.
- Approximately 84% of caregivers in NC support requiring employers to provide a limited amount of unpaid leave to employees.
- Approximately 84% of caregivers in NC support ensuring employers cannot fire an employee for taking time off for family caregiving.
- Approximately 73% of caregivers in NC support requiring employers to provide unpaid sick leave to all employees who have to take time off for caregiving.