Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program Quarterly Newsletter - Winter 2023

Caregiver Webinar Series

Did you miss the last *Caring for the Caregiver* webinar? Check out past webinars, hosted by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) and the MassTech Collaborative, on the EOEA YouTube channel.

Here are a few of the most recent webinars topics:

Home CareServices: How Family Caregivers are Supported (February 2023)

This webinar will help family caregivers learn more about the benefits of home care, eligibility requirements for in-home supports, and examples of how the Home Care Program benefits older adults and their family caregivers.

FamilyCaregivers' Communication with their Loved One (December 2022)

This webinar is the second in a two-part mini-series focused on communication in families. The first webinar (see below) focused on family caregivers' communication with family members, while this webinar focuses on family caregivers' communication with their loved one.

FamilyDynamics & Communication with Family Members (November 2022)

This webinar is the first in a two-part mini-series focused on communication in families. This first webinar focuses on family caregivers' communication with family members, while the second will focus on family caregivers' communication with their loved one.

If you have questions or comments about the webinar series, or would like to request a topic or speaker for an upcoming webinar, please contact masscaregiver@mass.gov

Information and Resources for Caregivers

4 Fantastic Books for Caregivers: Reading Recommendations

Is it Dementia, Depression or Both?

Physical Activity for Caregivers: How to Keep Your Loved One Active

The Surprising Benefits of Blue Spaces

When to Involve the Doctor

Emotional Health for Caregivers: Self-Care Resources

What Causes Caregiver Stress? 7 Self-Care Tips for Caregivers

How to Care for a Loved One with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Suddenly a Caregiver? Here's Some Help with Where to Start

How Caregivers Can Manage Risk-Taking Male Care Receivers

Understanding and Managing Caregiver Guilt

Home Away from Home: Relocating Your Parents (fact sheet)

10 Tips for Splitting Caregiving Costs Among Siblings

5 Tips for Difficult Family Caregiving Conversations

4 Things to Know When Taking a Loved One to the Doctor During COVID-19

How to Handle 'Hard Feelings' After Caregiving Ends

The Saving Power of a Caregiving Journal

Resource Spotlight

The National Alliance for Caregiving Opens Phone Line for Family Caregivers to Talk About Their Mental Well-Being

The National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) is spearheading a project to advance the mental well-being of family caregivers in the United States. NAC wants to hear from family caregivers on the joys, challenges, and struggles they've faced on their caregiving journey in order to better understand their needs and the supports and interventions that can be introduced to assist them.

If you're a family caregiver or have cared for someone in the past, you can call **1-888-665-2190** to share your caregiving story and the feelings associated with it. The phone line is also available in both Spanish and Mandarin.

If you would prefer to write out your response rather than leave an audio message, you may do so here.

Are you a family caregiver?

The National Alliance for Caregiving wants to get a pulse check on the mental well-being of family caregivers, and we want to hear from you.

CALL: 1.888.665.2190
To tell us how caregiving has affected your mental well-being.

Please note that this line is not monitored. If you are experiencing thoughts of harm to yourself or others, or you need someone to speak to, please call 9-8-8 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

If you'd like resources to support your mental and emotional health, text TOUGH to 741741 to reach a volunteer Crisis Counselor, free, 24/7.

We want to know:

- What joys have you experienced as a caregiver?
- How are you feeling about being a caregiver?
- What are challenges you have faced as a caregiver?
- What are concerns you have about providing care?

The message you leave will inform policy and practice efforts to improve support for family caregivers like you! All messages left will be anonymous, with only the transcript being used to help us advocate for change.

Please call today!

nac
National Alliance for Caregiving

Opinion and Thought Pieces on Caregiving

"The chronic stress of caregiving and inequity can have deleterious consequences. On a biological level, we are either resilient or are vulnerable and get crushed. The body ends up suffering the consequences of chronic stress."

-Dr. Martin Picard, Ph.D.

Who Will Care For 'Kinless' Seniors?

Two Programs Show Success Helping Young Caregivers

What I've Learned Being Reliant on a Caregiver

Family Caregivers of People with Long COVID Bear an Extra Burden

What Happens When a Family Caregiver Needs Caregiving?
(see quote on left)

Coping with the Emotional Highs and Lows of Caregiving

Mitochondrial Psychobiology Group,

Columbia University Irving Medical Center

[The Loving Sacrifices of Caregiving: How a Couple Remained Unified While Being Pulled in Different Directions Caring for Aging Parents]

Personal Accounts

[What My Brothers Taught Me About Caregiving and Gender Roles]

[As She Nursed Her Mom Through Cancer and Dementia, a Tense Relationship Began to Heal]

[I Helped My Mother to Live and Later Die]

"Caregivers find **inner strength** and **competence** they would never have thought they had."

Amy Abrams
Social Worker

[Caring for Mom While Coming to Terms with a New Reality]

[The Struggle: Notes from a Caregiver]

[From One Caregiver to Another: No One Knows What We Do]
See quote on left

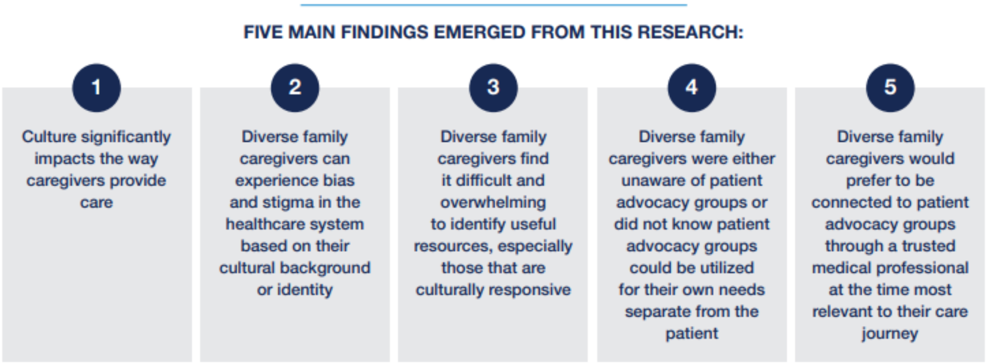
Policy & Research

Supporting Diverse Family Caregivers: A Guide for Patient Advocacy Groups

The National Alliance for Caregiving conducted structured interviews with professionals from patient advocacy groups and diverse family caregivers caring for someone who had been diagnosed with heart disease, blood cancer, lung cancer or lupus, conditions that are known to disproportionately affect diverse communities. The researchers wanted to better understand how culture and identity affects the way caregivers provide care, access culturally responsive supports and resources, and how caregivers engage with patient advocacy groups.

With the guidance of a panel of disease representative patient advocacy organizations, these findings shaped the content of this guide and supported the need for sections detailing the research findings, articulating what diverse caregivers say about their experiences, and offering tips for both advocating for and empowering diverse caregivers.

2023 GUIDEBOOK
SUPPORTING DIVERSE FAMILY CAREGIVERS:
A GUIDE FOR PATIENT ADVOCACY GROUPS



FIVE MAIN FINDINGS EMERGED FROM THIS RESEARCH:

1. Culture significantly impacts the way caregivers provide care
2. Diverse family caregivers can experience bias and stigma in the healthcare system based on their cultural background or identity
3. Diverse family caregivers find it difficult and overwhelming to identify useful resources, especially those that are culturally responsive
4. Diverse family caregivers were either unaware of patient advocacy groups or did not know patient advocacy groups could be utilized for their own needs separate from the patient
5. Diverse family caregivers would prefer to be connected to patient advocacy groups through a trusted medical professional at the time most relevant to their care journey

Quality of Communication with Direct Care Professionals in Residential Care Settings: The Association Between Family Caregiver Perceptions and Resident Mental Health

Proposed Rule Will Make More Grandparents and Other Relatives Eligible for Resources to Support Them in Caring for Children Whose Parents Cannot
February 2023 update from the Administration of Community Living: “The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announced a proposed rule that will make it easier for child welfare agencies to license relatives to foster children whose parents cannot care for them. (Specifically, the rule will allow child welfare agencies to create separate kinship caregiver licensing standards). This will allow more grandparents and other relative caregivers to access the financial assistance and other resources that are available to licensed foster homes, making it possible for more children to remain with their families during challenging times. ACF is encouraging child welfare agencies to place as few burdens as possible on grandparents and other kin to become licensed, consistent with the safety and well-being of the child.”

Dementia Action Alliance Announces Comprehensive How-to Manual, “Pathways to Well-Being with Dementia”
The Dementia Action Alliance recently released a comprehensive resource called “Pathways to Wellbeing with Dementia: A Manual of Help, Hope and Inspiration” which offers essential information about living well with dementia by people living with dementia, care partners and leading dementia specialists. This in-depth how-to manual provides essential information about living with dementia from 48 people living with dementia, care partners, and leading dementia specialists. The manual is written primarily for the person living with dementia. It is also useful to a much wider audience, including care partners, family, friends, neighbors, advocates, community supporters, faith groups, service providers, healthcare practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and academics.

Upcoming Webinars and Virtual Events

Let’s Get Away Together (Series): Let’s go to Canada!

March 14, 4:00 PM

Caregiver Lunch & Learn on the SHINE Program
(Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone on Medicare)

March 15,
12:00 PM

Managing Money

March 16, 11:00 AM

Beyond the Basics: Building Resilience for Informal Caregivers

March 17,
1:00 PM

Dementia Conversations

March 21,
12:00 PM

Understanding & Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior

March 23,
3:00 PM

Beyond the Basics: Enhancing Healthy Grief Reactions in Bereaved Clients

March 24,
1:00 PM

Virtual Wednesday tour of the Museum of Fine Arts – For People with Memory Loss and their Care Partners. This month's theme will be Maps; together participants will explore the different types of maps in the MFA collections and how they illustrate people’s journeys across the world and through history.
To register, contact access@mfa.org.

The Family Caregiver Support Program Fact Sheet is now available on Mass.gov in the following languages:

Arabic
Chinese
English
Haitian Creole
Khmer
Portuguese
Russian
Spanish
Ukrainian

Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program | Mass.gov

To submit content for this e-communication, please email Molly Evans at **Molly.R.Evans@mass.gov**.