Wisconsin’s Working Caregivers

STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS
We already knew…

- Employers who are aware of the needs of working caregivers and how to support them can reduce hidden costs (turnover costs, loss of institutional knowledge, loss of productivity) and increase productivity, employee retention, and improve recruitment efforts. *Harvard Business School

- Studies in other states recommend assessing needs of caregivers in the workplace and exploring different policies and resources to support working caregivers. *Massachusetts Business Roundtable; New York Office on Aging and Department of Labor.

- Caregivers seldom use FMLA. *WFCSA study – Feb 2021 (Current survey confirmed at 13%)

- Caregivers also reported that they felt they could continue meeting their work and home responsibilities for longer with just a little more help. *WFCSA study – Feb 2021
What We Learned

More than 8 in 10 caregivers reported having their work life interrupted
Most common interruptions included

Rearranged work schedule  68%
Left work early         57.7%
Unable to focus at work  56%
Responded to calls or emergencies  54.1%
Used break or lunch for caregiving  52.2%
Quotes:

“The just never knowing (is stressful). I am lucky. My boss is FANTASTIC”

“It is used as an excuse by my supervisor to not rely on me, to re-assign work, etc., even though I work many extra hours and am doing significant work.”

“Employer promotes work/life balance in words, but not actions.”
"[I] always feel like I have to make a choice of which is more important. My [care recipient] or my job."

56% of caregivers indicated that their current situation is unsustainable.
Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

- My caregiving responsibilities have increased due to COVID-19
  - Disagree: 15%
  - Neutral: 31%
  - Agree: 54%

- It is more difficult to balance caregiving and my job due to COVID-19
  - Disagree: 23%
  - Neutral: 37%
  - Agree: 40%

- The amount of time to myself has decreased due to COVID-19
  - Disagree: 31%
  - Neutral: 29%
  - Agree: 40%
Strategies

1. Find out how many employees are caregivers. UW-Extension offers a survey that is FREE to any employer anywhere in the world.

2. Create venues to explain what resources are available to employees.

3. Ask employers to consider what could work for them - benefits or programs they could offer employees. (Flex time, lunch and learn, EAP, connecting employees to community resources such as the local ADRC and respite)

4. Train HR staff and supervisors to understand working caregiver needs.

5. Use the worksheet in our survey report to set goals and get buy-in from others in your company. (Full survey report on WisconsinCaregiver.org)