



For Immediate Release:

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Baby Boomers Already Placing Strain on Caregiver Resources Burden in LA County Expected to Increase

LOS ANGELES – As large numbers of local baby boomers pass age 65, the demand on informal caregivers, which is already high, will further impact the physical, mental, and economic health of community members across Los Angeles County, according to a report released today by the Department of Public Health.

“More than 1.2 million people in Los Angeles County today provide care to a family member or another adult in need,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “Unpaid care takes a toll on the health and well-being of local individuals and families, and has a major economic impact not only on these families, but on local businesses, the workforce, and society as a whole.”

More than two-thirds of caregivers in LA County reported caring for someone 65 years of age or older. As the Baby Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) ages, the number of informal caregivers in LA County is expected to rise dramatically. The risk for chronic disease increases with age, resulting in a growing need for assistance with activities of daily living among persons with long-term illnesses such as late-stage diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, and Alzheimer’s disease.

“In light of recent cuts to senior services, these new data underscore the importance of prevention efforts to lessen the impact, both physical and financial, of chronic disease risk in our community,” said June Simmons, CEO of Partners in Care Foundation. “This report also stresses the need to make community-based chronic disease management as well as caregiving services and resources available to all.”

Informal caregiving includes a range of activities, such as assisting with personal hygiene and other activities of daily living, helping with medication and visits to the doctor, managing finances, and providing emotional support. According to the report, *LA Health – Informal Caregiving: Implications for Public Health*, almost one in seven adults in Los Angeles County reported providing this type of care during the past month to a relative or an adult who is aging or has a long-term illness, chronic condition, or disability. One-quarter of informal caregivers in LA County spent 20 hours or more per week providing unpaid care to someone who needs help in addition to working full time.

Nationally, informal care, if paid for, would cost \$375 billion per year, amounting to about 2.7 percent of the US total GDP for 2007. These costs do not include the estimated \$17 billion in lost

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productivity to businesses due to workplace disruptions, absences, reduction of full-time to part-time hours, and leaving work to be a caregiver. Informal caregivers provide about 80 percent of all long-term care services in the United States.

Resources for caregivers seeking help or support are listed in the report, and include the Los Angeles County Department of Community and Senior Services, the City of Los Angeles Department of Aging, the Alzheimer's Association, and the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA). To access the report, please visit: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do, please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: @LAPublicHealth.

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