

2019/2020 **Caregiving and the
Workplace: Employer
Benchmarking Survey**

April 2020



Foreword

This report and the survey results contained were completed prior to the onset of the COVID-19 health crisis in the U.S. In addition to widespread illness and deaths, the crisis triggered a massive relocation of employees to their homes, tremendous stress on those without that option, financial issues and the emotional fallout from social distancing measures. All of these effects – some temporary while others will be longer lasting – increase the caregiving burden on many Americans and intensify the need for employers to provide support for caregiving employees in their organizations. The survey results that follow are a snapshot of how large employers were thinking about and responding to the needs of employee-caregivers in their midst just prior to March 2020.

Why Caregiving is Important for Employers

One in six employees in the U.S.¹ provides care for an ill or elderly family member. And more than 25% of these employee-caregivers are millennials, many of which may also have childcare responsibilities. (We do not include childcare in our definition of caregiving for the purposes of this report.)

Employees who balance jobs with caregiving responsibilities face many challenges including:

- Stress and anxiety;
- Loneliness and isolation;
- Higher incidence of conditions like obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular illness and mental illness;
- Financial problems.

And the presence of caregivers in the workforce poses many challenges for employers as well, including:

- Absenteeism and presenteeism;
- Reduced employee engagement and productivity;
- Loss of valuable talent due to caregiving responsibilities;
- Higher incidence of chronic illness;
- Increased healthcare costs.

Demographic changes including an aging population combined with gaps in the U.S. healthcare system mean the number of employee-caregivers will increase in the coming years. What we're experiencing now is likely just the tip of the iceberg, and employers need to be thinking about how best to support these employees now and in the future.

Background

Northeast Business Group on Health (NEBGH) and AARP began a multi-year collaboration in late 2016 to assess employer interest in caregiving; understand the facts, challenges and opportunities for employers in addressing caregiving among employees and their loved ones; and identify what workplace policies, programs and services are in place – or being considered – to support caregivers.

As part of our collaboration, NEBGH and AARP completed a 2017 survey of nearly 130 benefits managers from mostly large U.S. employers based in or near New York City and in several other areas² across the country, to gather detailed information about practices and perspectives related to creating a “caregiving-friendly” workplace. We followed that survey in late 2017 with a guide geared to helping employers think through what they might do to better support employee-caregivers.

In late 2019, NEBGH and AARP again set out to survey employers to gauge awareness and attitudes about caregiving, assess what’s in place to support employees, and see what may have changed – if anything – since the original 2017 survey. The 2019/2020 survey included benefits managers from 119 mostly large U.S. employers, including 36 organizations based in or near New York City, 34 in California (most in Silicon Valley), and the rest in the Midwest, Florida, Kansas and Pennsylvania.

Our hope is that employers will use survey results to understand how other employers are thinking about caregiving, compare what’s in place in their own organizations vs. others, and prepare for a future in which an ever-increasing number of employees will be shouldering some type of caregiving responsibilities.

² Midwest, Florida, California, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Houston, Memphis

Survey Results in 2019/2020 vs. 2017

While some employers responded to both the 2017 and 2019 surveys, it would be misleading to draw too many close comparisons. Nonetheless, the 2019 results indicate growing awareness about caregiving as an important workplace issue deserving of specific policies and programs – a trend borne out by discussions among employers conducted by both NEBGH and AARP.

The 2019/2020 survey results show:

- 78% of employers say caregiving will be an increasingly important issue over the next five years
- Caregiving is a top priority for 60% of employers
- 45% of employers believe they are on par with similar organizations in developing caregiving-friendly benefits and 23% see themselves as below or well below average

Key take-aways from the 2019/2020 survey include:

- 91% of employers recognize that caregivers may abandon self-care, a 17% increase from 2017
- Employers know that employees may not be comfortable identifying their caregiving status to managers – less than 50% thought they would be
- 84% of employers believe that having a caregiving-friendly workplace is important for retaining and attracting talent – a 9% increase from 2017
- 58% of respondents think their C-suite is supportive of caregiving policies – a 14% increase from 2017 (but 38% were not sure how supportive the C-suite would be and that therefore building a business case is necessary)
- 71% of employers are providing flexible work options
- An increasing number of employers are providing paid leave specifically for caregiving – the percentage of those not doing so fell from 89% to 77%
- Increasing leave for caregiving and implementing flexible work arrangements were at the top of benefit managers' caregiving wish lists

Comparing California with New York City Metro

Most of the 36 NEBGH members that responded to the 2019/2020 survey are based in or near New York City, and we were curious to see if they responded differently from employers in California, especially since most of those who responded are located in Silicon Valley. Twenty-five of the 34 California respondents are from technology companies whereas NEBGH members are from diverse industries, and the majority of those in California have more than 5,000 employees compared with a bit more than a quarter of those from NEBGH.

We found that caregiving is equally considered to be an important issue and a priority for the next 5 -10 years by both sets of employers. Likewise, there is strong agreement that supporting caregivers increases their physical and mental health as well as productivity, and that it is important to be identified as a caregiving-friendly workplace. The vast majority (85% to 95%) believe that having caregiving-friendly programs will attract and retain talent.

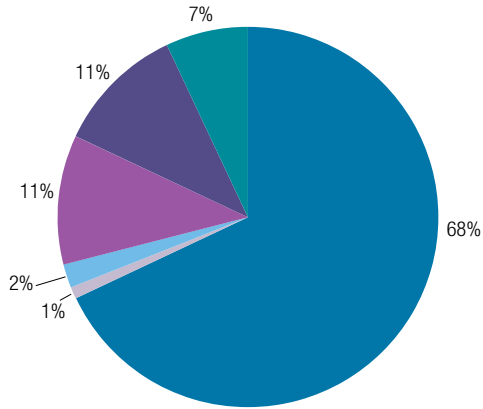
There were some key areas in which employers differed in their responses, depending on region:

- Only **9% of the California employers** believe their employees are uncomfortable identifying their caregiver status to managers or colleagues, vs. **23% of NEBGH members**
- But **26% of California respondents** think employees would be reluctant to use caregiving benefits vs. **10% of respondents in the NYC metro area**
- **59% of the California employers** have caregiving leave of 4 or more weeks, compared to **41% of New York counterparts**
- Subsidized in-home back-up care is offered by **less than 50% of NEBGH employers** but roughly **three-quarters of the California employers**
- Access to free/low-cost resources to support caregivers is provided by **50% of California respondents** vs. **23% of NEBGH members**
- **47% of the California employers** who responded accommodate flexible schedules versus **39% in New York**
- **46% of employers from NEBGH** have issues communicating caregiving benefits to their employees, and **61% have those challenges in California**
- **45% of California employers** think they are ahead of their peers in offering caregiving-friendly benefits compared to **31% of NEBGH employers**

Here are the overall results of our
**2019/2020 Caregiving in
the Workplace: Employer
Benchmarking Survey**

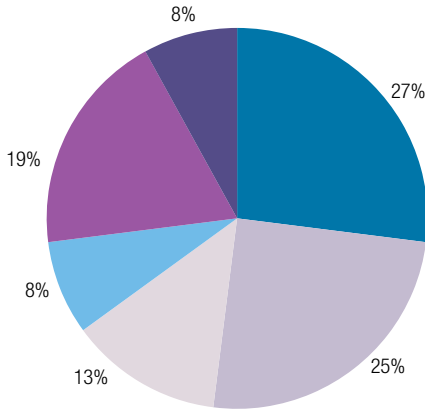
HOW CAREGIVING-FRIENDLY ARE YOU?

What is your role in your organization?



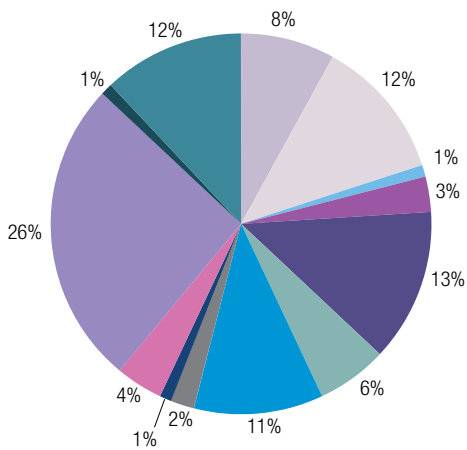
Benefits Professional	68%
Talent Recruitment and Management	1%
Employee Assistance Program	0%
Employee Leave Specialist	2%
C-Suite/Executive	11%
Wellness/Well-being Professional	11%
Other	7%

How many employees does your company have?



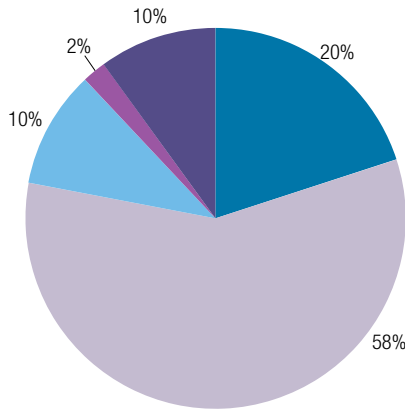
Under 1,000	27%
1,001 - 5,000	25%
5,001 - 10,000	13%
10,001 - 20,000	8%
20,001 - 50,000	19%
Over 50,000	8%

Industry type



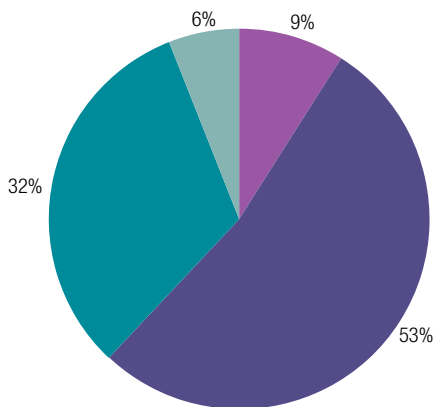
Construction	0%
Education	8%
Finance/Banking/Insurance	12%
Food Services	1%
Government	3%
Healthcare	13%
Hospitality	0%
Legal/Accounting/Consulting/Other Prof.	6%
Manufacturing	11%
News/Media/Firm/Publishing	2%
Oil/Gas/Power/Water	1%
Retail	4%
Technology	26%
Transportation	1%
Other	12%

Our current workplace culture supports employee-caregivers



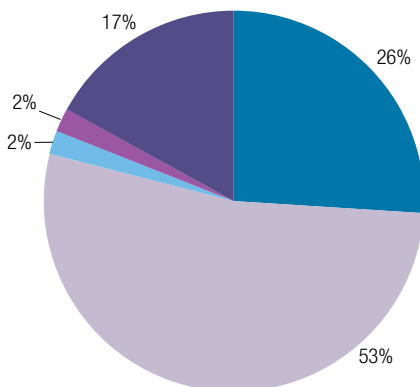
Strongly Agree	20%
Agree	58%
Disagree	10%
Strongly Disagree	2%
Not Sure	10%

Please characterize where caregiving falls within your priorities for employee health and benefit issues



Top 5	9%
Top 10	53%
Aware, but unable to address it	32%
Not on my radar	6%

During the next five years, caregiving will become an increasingly important issue to our organization.

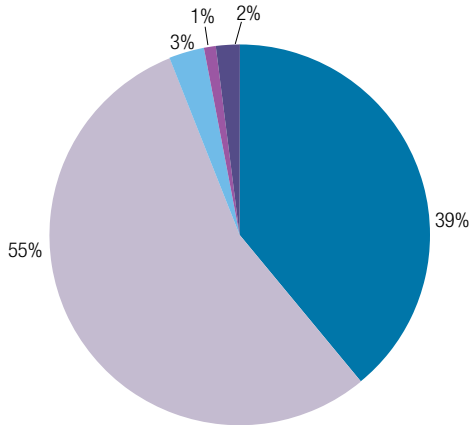


Strongly Agree	26%
Agree	53%
Disagree	2%
Strongly Disagree	2%
Not Sure	17%

AWARENESS OF CAREGIVING FOR SICK OR ELDERLY FAMILY MEMBER

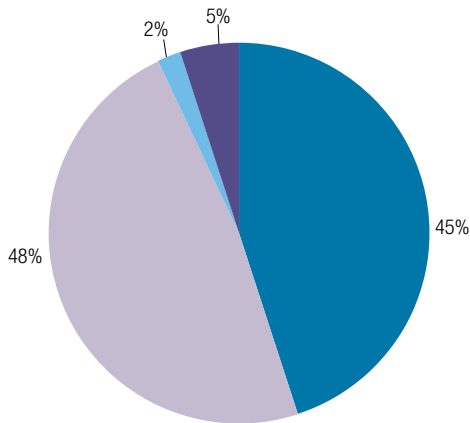
Please select the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements in general.

There are benefits, programs and policies that can make a workplace more caregiving-friendly.



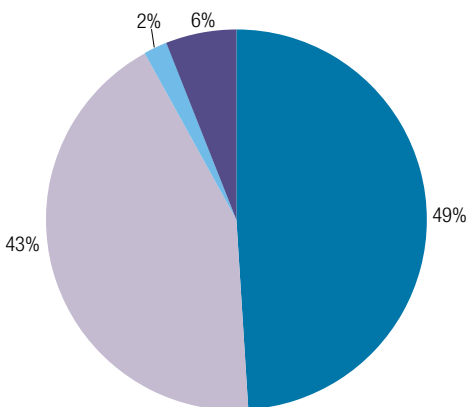
Strongly Agree	39%
Agree	55%
Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	1%
Not Sure	2%

Caregiving is a strong driver of presenteeism* and absenteeism. (*Presenteeism is when workers are present for work, but may be distracted thus not optimizing their capacity.)



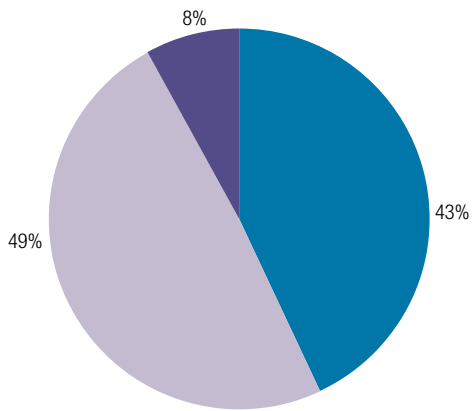
Strongly Agree	45%
Agree	48%
Disagree	2%
Strongly Disagree	0%
Not Sure	5%

Caregivers are more likely than non-caregivers to abandon self-care.



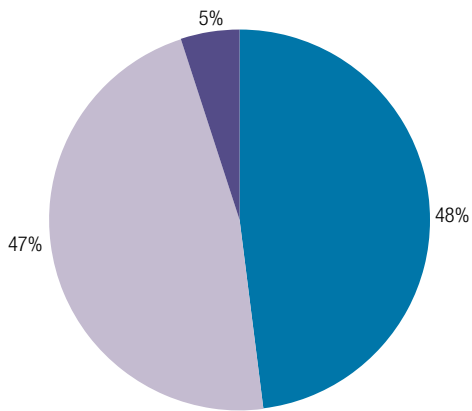
Strongly Agree	49%
Agree	43%
Disagree	2%
Strongly Disagree	0%
Not Sure	6%

Supporting caregivers will increase workforce productivity.



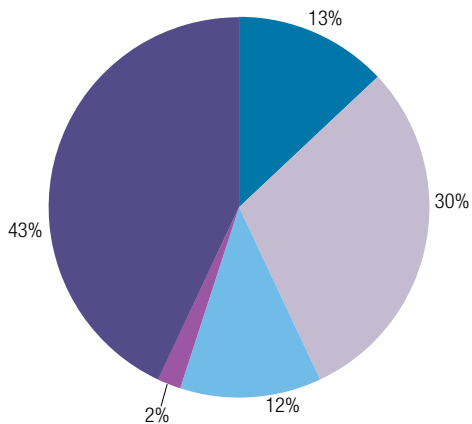
Strongly Agree	43%
Agree	49%
Disagree	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%
Not Sure	8%

Supporting caregivers will enhance their physical and mental health.



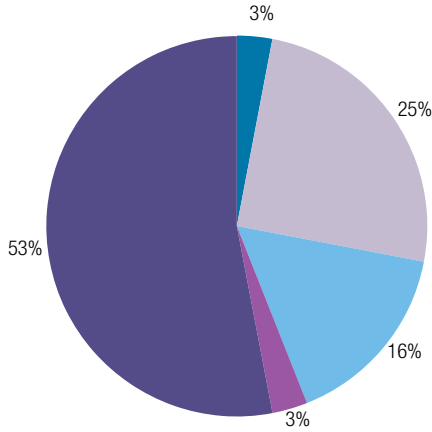
Strongly Agree	48%
Agree	47%
Disagree	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%
Not Sure	5%

My organization is looking to put in place or enhance caregiving benefits in the next 2 years.



Strongly Agree	13%
Agree	30%
Disagree	12%
Strongly Disagree	2%
Not Sure	43%

My organization has lost employees because of caregiving commitments in the last 12 months.

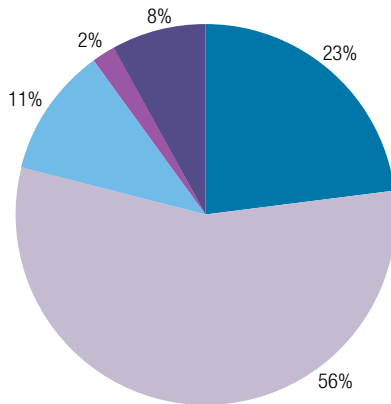


Strongly Agree	3%
Agree	25%
Disagree	16%
Strongly Disagree	3%
Not Sure	53%

CURRENT WORKPLACE ATTITUDES

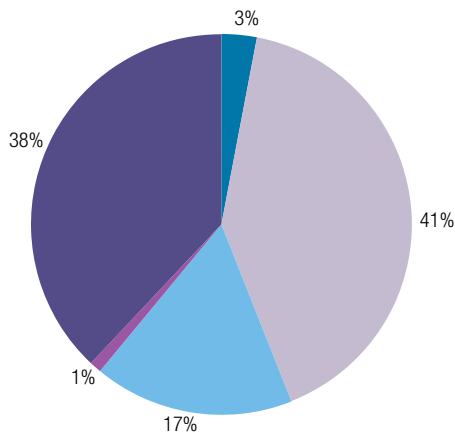
Please select the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements in general.

The benefits department works closely with employee assistance programs (EAP) or work-life programs to support caregivers.



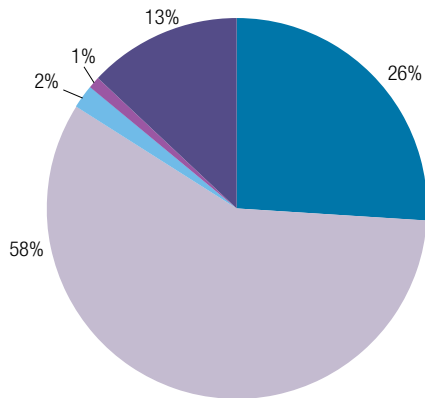
Strongly Agree	23%
Agree	56%
Disagree	11%
Strongly Disagree	2%
Not Sure	8%

Employees are comfortable identifying their caregiver status to managers and colleagues.



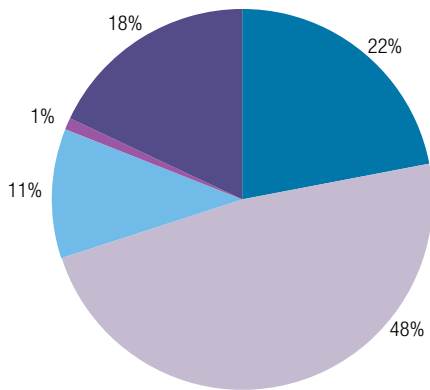
Strongly Agree	3%
Agree	41%
Disagree	17%
Strongly Disagree	1%
Not Sure	38%

Having benefits and programs in place to support caregivers would attract and retain talent.



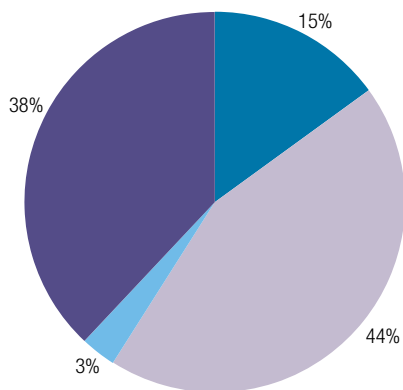
Strongly Agree	26%
Agree	58%
Disagree	2%
Strongly Disagree	1%
Not Sure	13%

Being identified as a caregiving-friendly workplace is important to our organization.



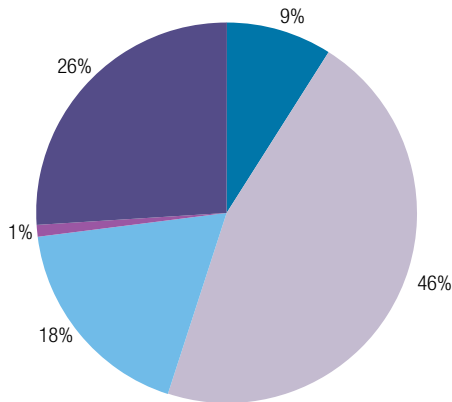
Strongly Agree	22%
Agree	48%
Disagree	11%
Strongly Disagree	1%
Not Sure	18%

The C-suite will support caregiving-friendly policies.



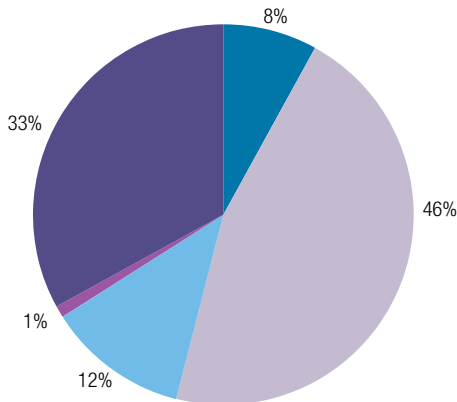
Strongly Agree	15%
Agree	44%
Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	0%
Not Sure	38%

Employees at our organization readily use any caregiving benefits and support available to them.



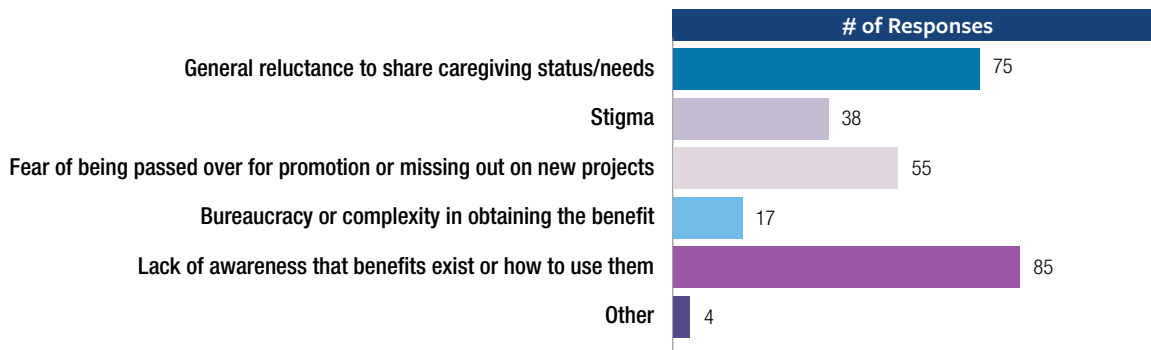
Strongly Agree	9%
Agree	46%
Disagree	18%
Strongly Disagree	1%
Not Sure	26%

In my organization, managers know it's important to find ways to support caregivers that report to them.



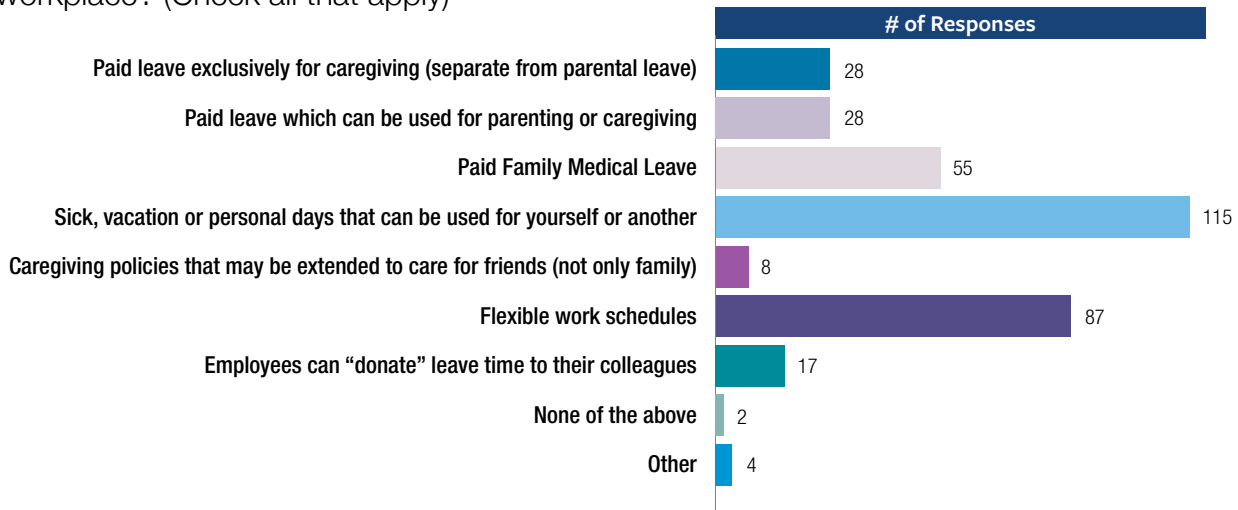
Strongly Agree	8%
Agree	46%
Disagree	12%
Strongly Disagree	1%
Not Sure	33%

Employees may be reluctant to identify they are a caregiver or access caregiving benefits because of the following barriers (check all that apply):

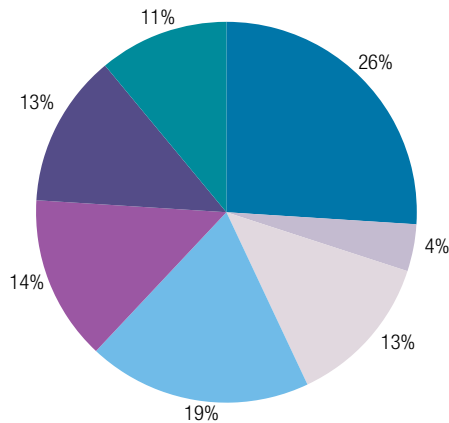


CURRENT CAREGIVING BENEFITS, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Leave policies: Which of the following policies are currently available to employees at your workplace? (Check all that apply)

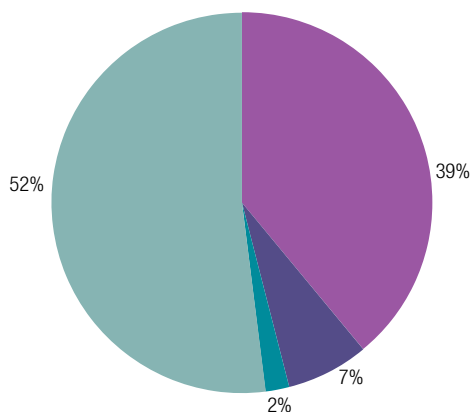


How many hours per year of paid caregiving leave (or other leave types that may be used for caregiving) do employees have access to?



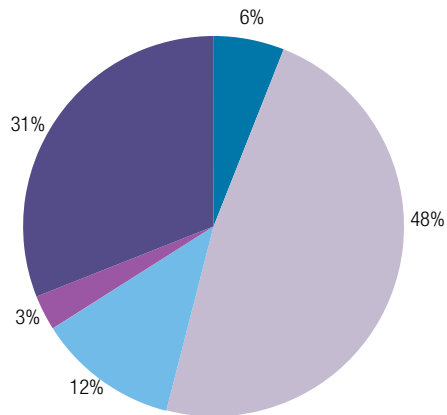
None	26%
Less than 1 week	4%
1 week to less than 2 weeks	13%
2 weeks to less than 4 weeks	19%
4 weeks to less than 8 weeks	14%
8 weeks to less than 12 weeks	13%
12 weeks or more	11%

Can you estimate the percentage of your employees who have used leave time for caregiving in the last 12 months?



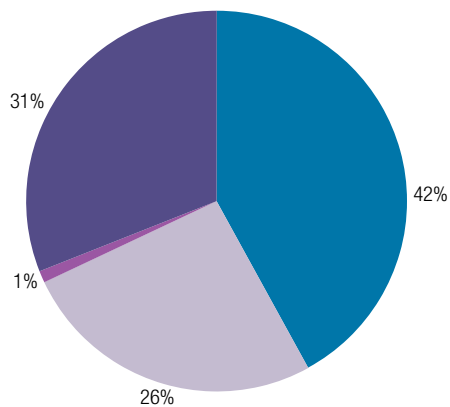
Less than 10%	39%
10% to 25%	7%
More than 25%	2%
Don't know	52%

Employee Assistance Program and/or Work-Life Program with services specific to caregivers.
 If you can, provide a rough estimate of what % of your population has taken advantage of this:



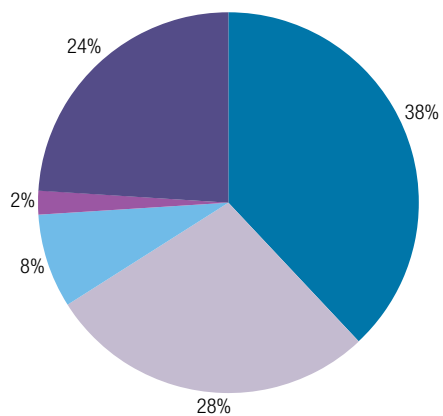
Not offered	6%
Less than 10%	48%
11% to 25%	12%
More than 25%	3%
Not Sure	31%

Employee caregiver support, affinity or employee resource groups.
 If you can, provide a rough estimate of what % of your population has taken advantage of this:



Not offered	42%
Less than 10%	26%
11% to 25%	0%
More than 25%	1%
Not Sure	31%

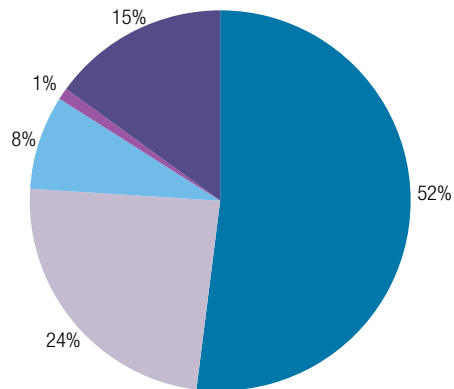
Counseling, coaching or wellness programs specific to supporting caregivers themselves.
 If you can, provide a rough estimate of what % of your population has taken advantage of this:



Not offered	38%
Less than 10%	28%
11% to 25%	8%
More than 25%	2%
Not Sure	24%

Subsidized in-home back-up care, such as Bright Horizons or Care.com.

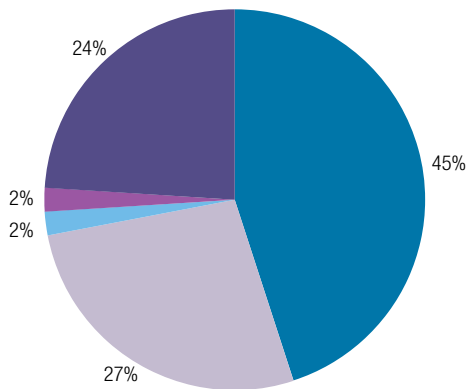
If you can, provide a rough estimate of what % of your population has taken advantage of this:



Not offered	52%
Less than 10%	24%
11% to 25%	8%
More than 25%	1%
Not Sure	15%

Access to free/low-cost resources to support caregivers.

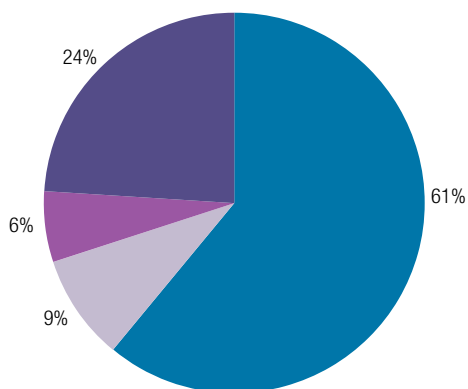
If you can, provide a rough estimate of what % of your population has taken advantage of this:



Not offered	45%
Less than 10%	27%
11% to 25%	2%
More than 25%	2%
Not Sure	24%

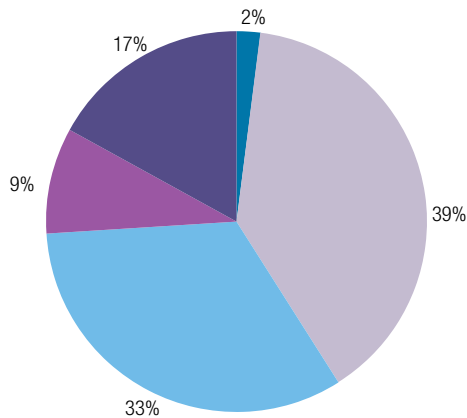
Insurance and financial benefits for caregivers.

If you can, provide a rough estimate of what % of your population has taken advantage of this:



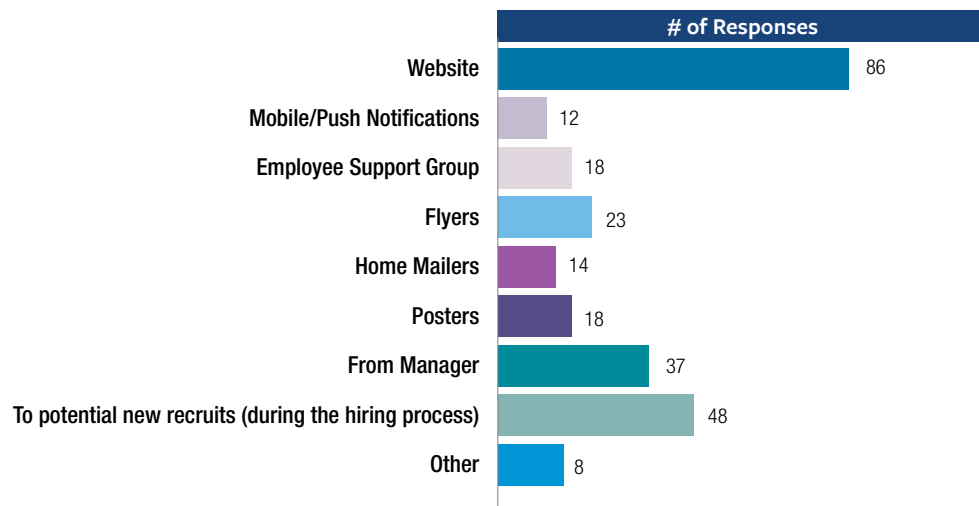
Not offered	61%
Less than 10%	9%
11% to 25%	0%
More than 25%	6%
Not Sure	24%

How aware are the employees at your company of employee benefits for caregiving? (Please choose the most accurate option)

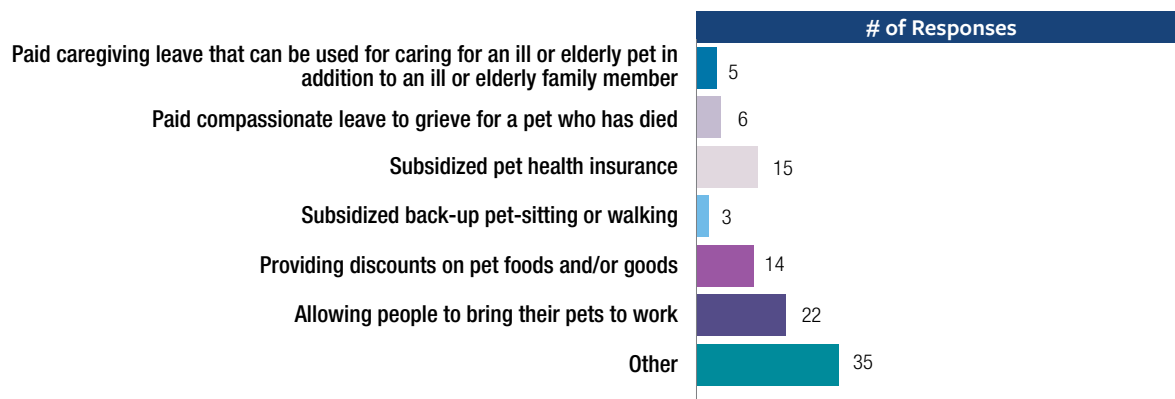


Very aware	2%
Somewhat aware	39%
Not very aware	33%
Not at all aware	9%
Not applicable	17%

How is the availability of caregiving benefits communicated? (Check all that apply)



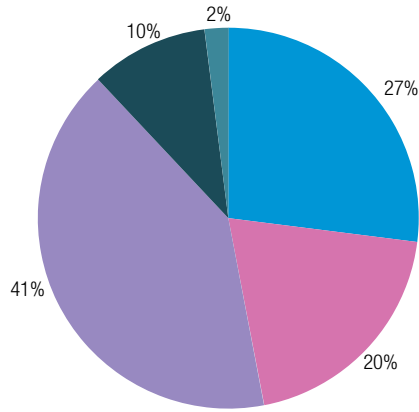
Many people consider their pets to be part of their families. With that in mind, please indicate which of these you currently offer or will consider offering in the future (check all that apply):



BARRIERS TO BEING A “CAREGIVING-FRIENDLY” WORKPLACE

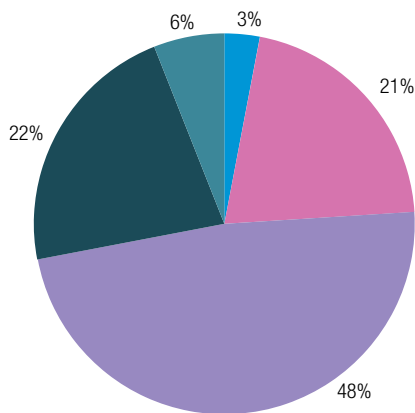
In your opinion, what are the greatest barriers preventing a workplace from being caregiving-friendly?

Negative stigma toward caregiving:



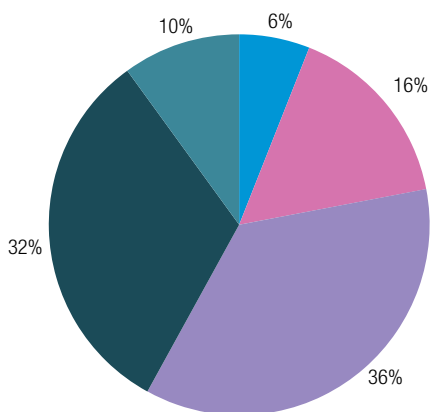
1 (Not a barrier)	27%
2	20%
3 (Moderate barrier)	41%
4	10%
5 (Extreme barrier)	2%

Lack of engagement with caregiving support programs:



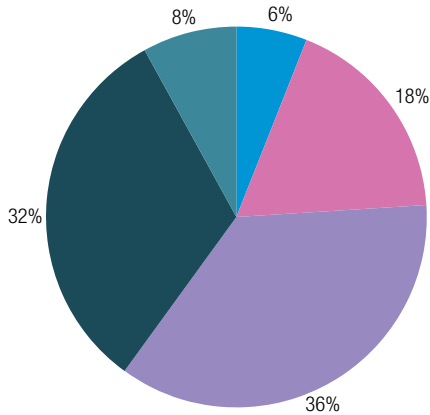
1 (Not a barrier)	3%
2	21%
3 (Moderate barrier)	48%
4	22%
5 (Extreme barrier)	6%

Lack of data to identify caregivers:



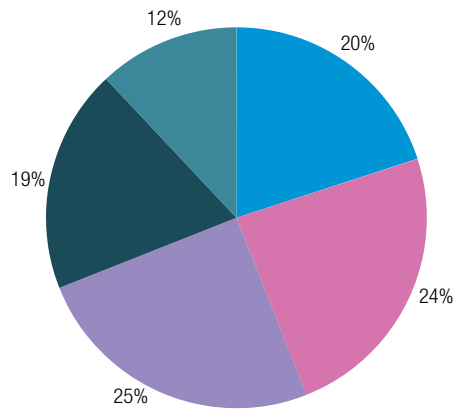
1 (Not a barrier)	6%
2	16%
3 (Moderate barrier)	36%
4	32%
5 (Extreme barrier)	10%

Absence of employer benchmarks and best practices for caregiving:



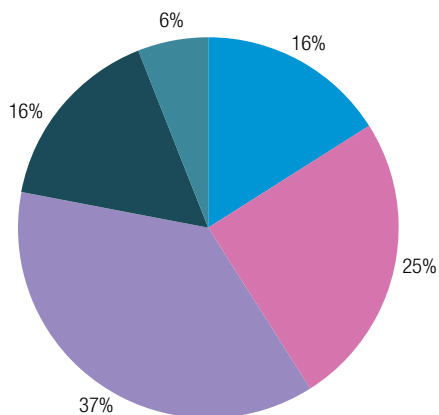
1 (Not a barrier)	6%
2	18%
3 (Moderate barrier)	36%
4	32%
5 (Extreme barrier)	8%

Difficulty getting buy-in from senior leadership:



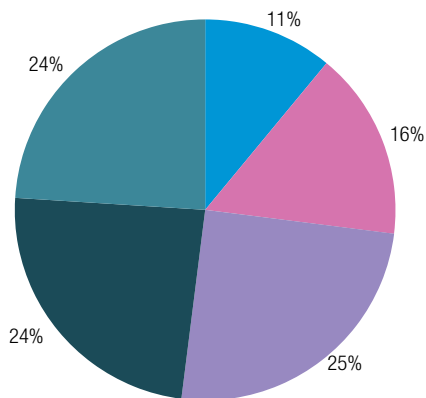
1 (Not a barrier)	20%
2	24%
3 (Moderate barrier)	25%
4	19%
5 (Extreme barrier)	12%

Challenge of managing additional vendors to provide caregiving services:



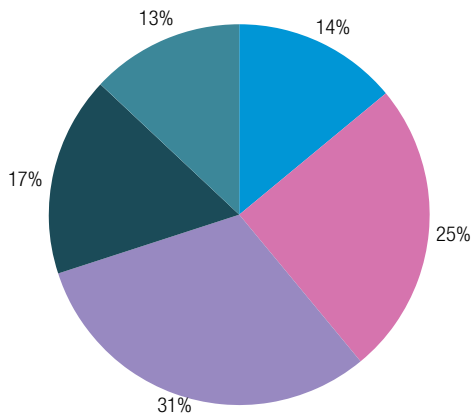
1 (Not a barrier)	16%
2	25%
3 (Moderate barrier)	37%
4	16%
5 (Extreme barrier)	6%

Lack of financial resources:



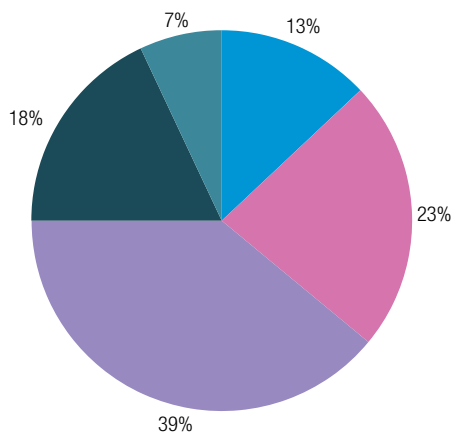
1 (Not a barrier)	11%
2	16%
3 (Moderate barrier)	25%
4	24%
5 (Extreme barrier)	24%

Insufficient organizational capacity to support leave or flexible schedules:



1 (Not a barrier)	14%
2	25%
3 (Moderate barrier)	31%
4	17%
5 (Extreme barrier)	13%

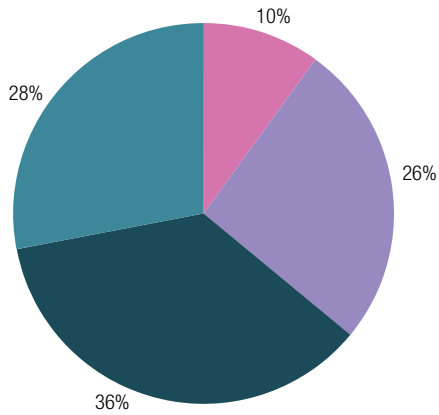
Communication challenges:



1 (Not a barrier)	13%
2	23%
3 (Moderate barrier)	39%
4	18%
5 (Extreme barrier)	7%

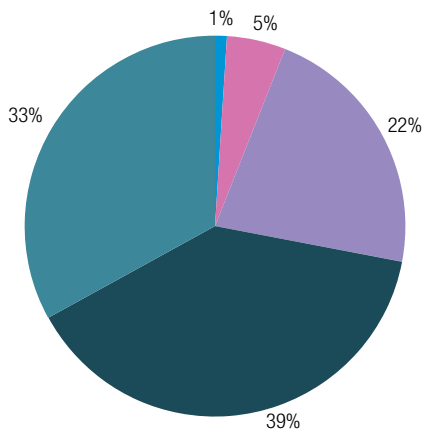
How important are the following to the business case for a caregiving-friendly workplace?

Financial ROI (reduced absenteeism, lower healthcare costs, lost productivity, etc.):



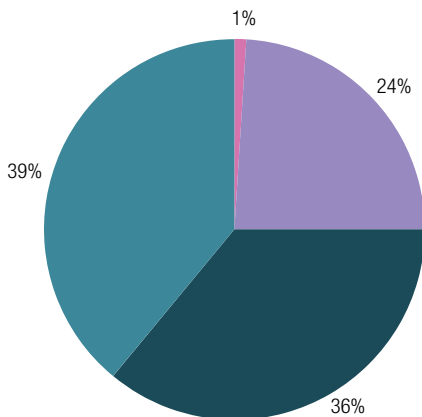
1 (Not at all important)	0%
2	10%
3 (Moderately important)	26%
4	36%
5 (Extremely important)	28%

Attracting and retaining talent:



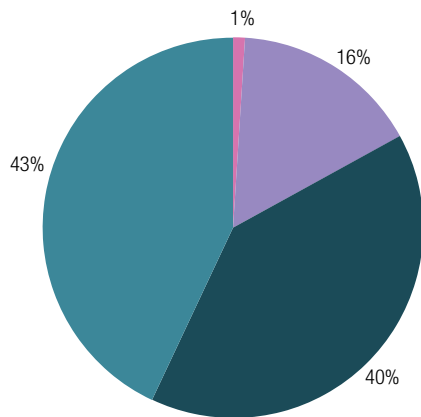
1 (Not at all important)	1%
2	5%
3 (Moderately important)	22%
4	39%
5 (Extremely important)	33%

Employee engagement:



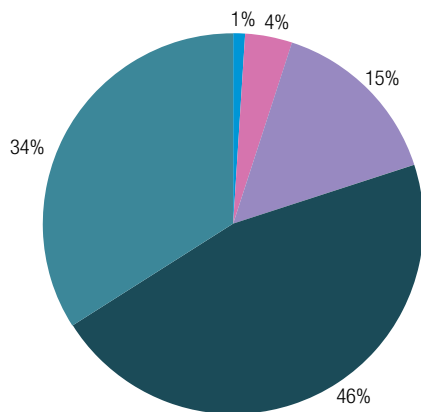
1 (Not at all important)	0%
2	1%
3 (Moderately important)	24%
4	36%
5 (Extremely important)	39%

Employee health and well-being:



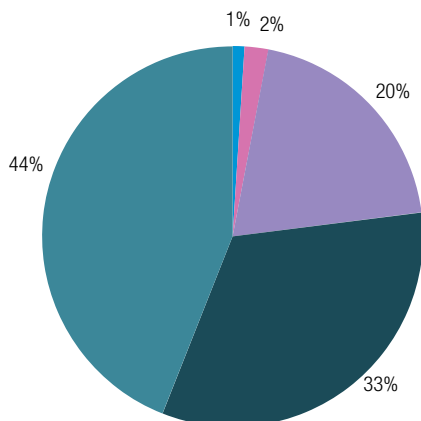
1 (Not at all important)	0%
2	1%
3 (Moderately important)	16%
4	40%
5 (Extremely important)	43%

Increase productivity:



1 (Not at all important)	1%
2	4%
3 (Moderately important)	15%
4	46%
5 (Extremely important)	34%

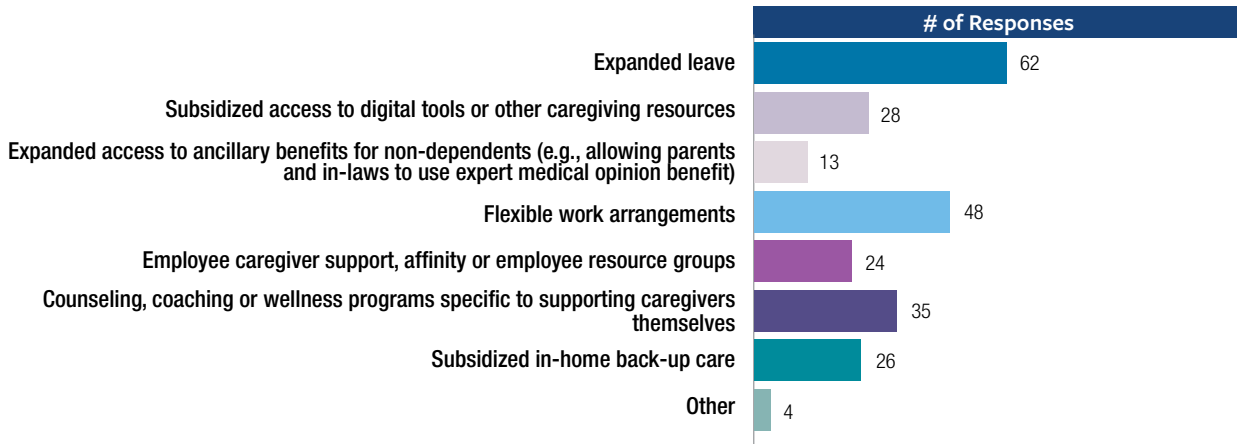
It's the right thing to do:



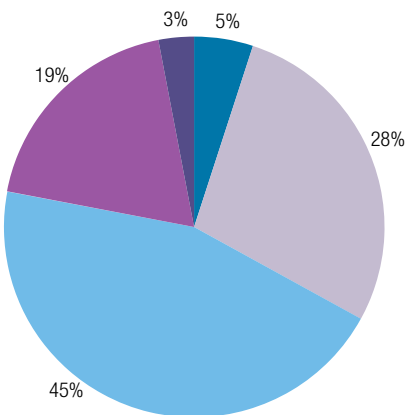
1 (Not at all important)	1%
2	2%
3 (Moderately important)	20%
4	33%
5 (Extremely important)	44%

ON THE HORIZON

Your caregiving wishlist: Regardless of any other constraints, if you could implement two new policies, programs or benefits to support caregivers tomorrow, which would you choose? (Choose 2)

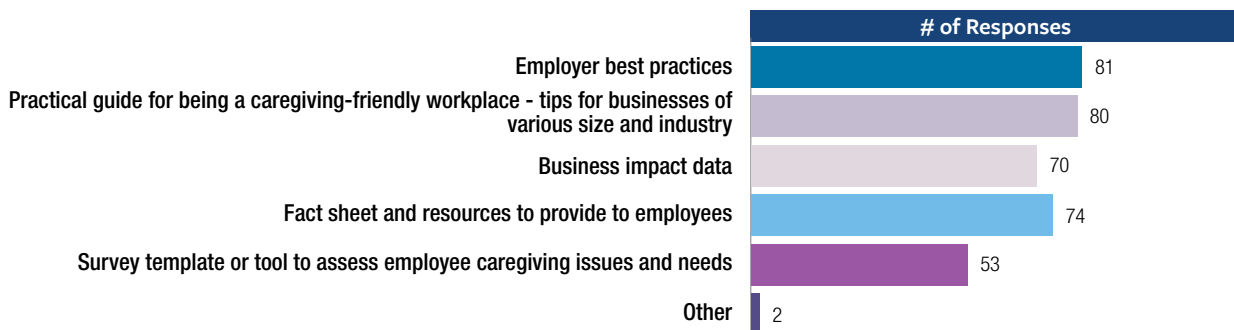


How do you think your company measures up against other similar employers in supporting employee caregivers?

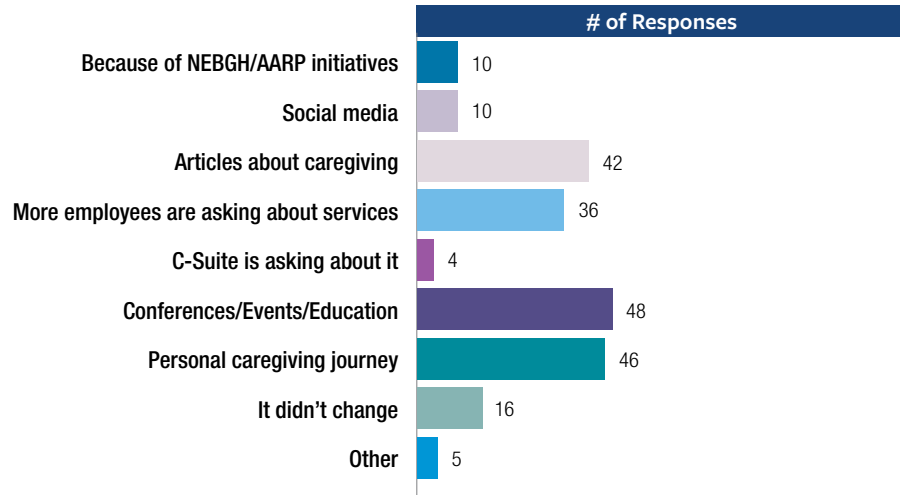


Well above average	5%
Above Average	28%
Average	45%
Below average	19%
Well below average	3%

What resources, guides or toolkits would be most helpful to you as a benefits professional when considering caregiving benefits, programs and policies? (Check all that apply)



Your awareness of caregiving has changed over the last 2 years because of (check all that apply):



About Northeast Business Group on Health

Northeast Business Group on Health (NEBGH) is an employer-led, multi-stakeholder coalition that empowers our members to drive excellence in health and achieve the highest value in healthcare delivery and the consumer experience. Our employer/purchaser members cover 6 million lives in the U.S. and 10 million globally.

About AARP

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

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