



# AGING TODAY

## This Holiday Season- Remember the Family Caregivers



By Bob Roth, Managing Partner of Cypress HomeCare Solutions

With the high holidays nearly upon us, many of us are preparing for the traditions of these days of awe, and at the same time some of us are providing care for an aging loved one, otherwise known as family caregivers. This year these family caregivers are contemplating the difficulties of attending worship services and attending family gatherings, and at the same time protecting and keeping their loved ones safe from the coronavirus pandemic, especially with the uptick with the new delta variant.

Family caregiving is at the foundation of our family's home care agencies beginning. My family and I created Cypress HomeCare Solutions to care for other people's moms and dads in the same way we had learned to care for our own mom. Now, 27 years after Cypress's founding, there has never been a more important time than now to honor, respect, and assist these unsung heroes that are making incredible sacrifices in their lives to care for the ones they love.

The family caregivers are the backbone of our country's caregiving core. Many of us remember that back in 2011 the first of the baby boomers began turning 65 at a clip of 10,000 a day and now in just a little more than 4 years they will begin turning 80. There is nothing magical about 80, except that the number multiple comorbidities for these individuals have increased to a point where many struggle to be able to live alone in the comfort of their own home. Staying independent is the goal and to do so you have to be able to perform these essential activity of daily living (ADL)

Basic ADLs include six essential skills:

1. Bathing and showering: the ability to bathe self and maintain dental, hair, and nail hygiene
2. Continence: having complete control of bowels and bladder

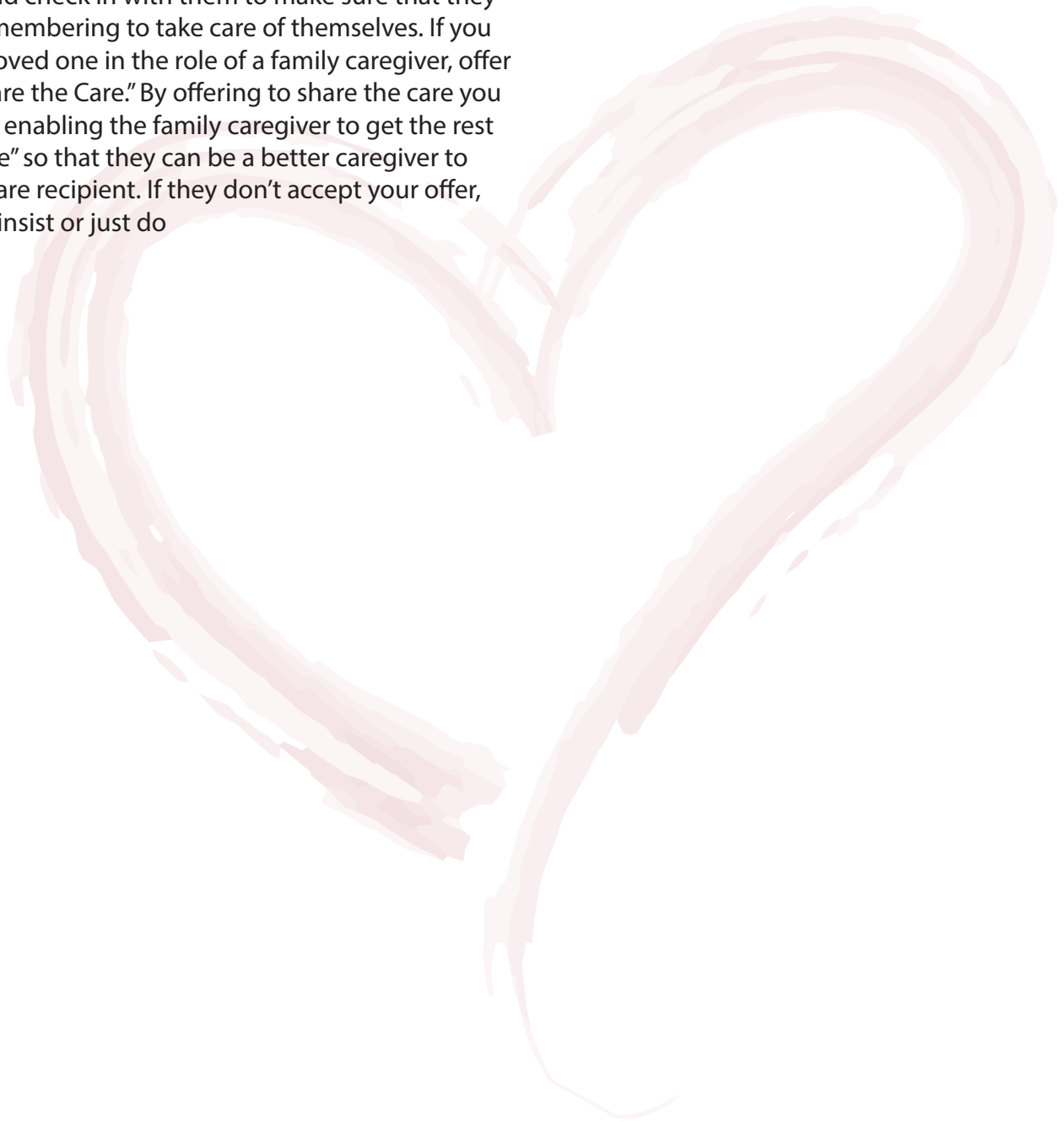
3. Dressing: the ability to select appropriate clothes and outerwear, and to dress self independently
4. Mobility: being able to walk or transfer from one place to another, specifically in and out of a bed or chair
5. Feeding (excluding meal preparation): the ability to get food from plate to mouth, and to chew and swallow
6. Toileting: the ability to get on and off the toilet and clean self without assistance

According to a 2020 survey by AARP, more than 50 million Americans now serve as unpaid caregivers for adult family members or friends and it's only going to continue to grow. Many of these family caregivers are struggling as well, sacrificing their own health and well-being to assist their loved ones for years on end. Consistent, skilled, and affordable care is now in short supply — and getting shorter — and the family caregivers are shouldering an increasingly unsustainable burden without the respite assistance.

The challenges centered around affordability and workforce are not just a United States problem, many countries are facing this same issue. Japan has the world's oldest population. Japanese lawmakers passed a long-term care insurance program in 1997. The U.S. Congress seems unlikely to follow suit any time soon. But there is hope, something we should all be watching is the Long-Term Services and Supports Trust program (LTSS program) that was passed by the Washington State legislature and their Governor Jay Inslee signed in to law in 2019. Here is a summary of the bill:

- Starting January 1, 2022, a 0.58% premium assessment will be imposed on all Washington employee wages.
- Starting January 1, 2025, proceeds of this premium assessment will be used to provide long-term services and supports benefits

For all the family caregivers out there, please know that you are not alone. At this year's high holiday services and family get togethers take inventory of your loved ones that are performing these selfless acts and check in with them to make sure that they are remembering to take care of themselves. If you see a loved one in the role of a family caregiver, offer to "Share the Care." By offering to share the care you will be enabling the family caregiver to get the rest "respite" so that they can be a better caregiver to their care recipient. If they don't accept your offer, either insist or just do



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