

Massive Caregiver Shortage Expected in Coming Decades

Family caregivers—including family members, partners, or close friends are a key factor in the ability to remain in one's home and in the community when disability strikes. The American Association of Retired Persons' (AARP) Public Policy Institute examined the ratio of potential caregivers to seniors aged 80 and older in order to calculate the availability of family caregivers during the upcoming decades.

The authors defined "caregiver support ratio" as the number of potential caregivers aged 45–64 for each person aged 80 and older. According to the authors, about 14 percent of these potential caregivers currently provide care for someone 80 or older, 9 percent care for someone 60 to 79, and 7 percent care for someone 18 to 59. In 2010, the caregiver support ratio was more than 7.2 potential caregivers for each senior over the age of 80. By 2030, the caregiver support ratio drops precipitously to 4.1 to 1. In 2050, when all of the Baby Boomer generation will be past their 80th birthday, the caregiver support ratio declines even further to a ratio of 2.9 to 1.

"More than two-thirds (68 percent) of Americans believe they will be able to rely on their families to meet their needs when they need long-term care," said Lynn Feinberg, AARP senior policy analyst and one of the report's authors. "But this confidence is likely to deflate when it collides with the dramatically shrinking availability of family caregivers in the future."

The impending "Silver Tsunami," the [growing Alzheimer's epidemic](#), and the future dearth of potential caregivers all point to an obvious increased need for long-term care services in America. [The Commission on Long-Term Care](#) is expected to consider all of these factors as they prepare to issue a report outlining policy recommendations in September.

Read the full report: [The Aging of the Baby Boom and the Growing Care Gap: A Look at Future Declines in the Availability of Family Caregivers.](#)