

CAREGIVER STATISTICS:

- In New Jersey alone, nearly 1.1 million unpaid caregivers support a family member often from birth through adulthood.
- 30,000 NJ children are primary caregivers for parents, grandparents or siblings.
- Caregivers tend to die 12-15 years before non-caregivers.
- The value of the services family caregivers provide for "free" is estimated to be almost \$300 billion a year.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Paid Family Leave Act Update!
- New FMLA Leave for Service Men and Women
- Profile on Older Americans
- Spotlight On Caring Bridge

Paid Family Leave Act Passes Senate and Assembly Vote but Stalls In Final Approval

Thanks to hundreds of phone calls, letters and emails to Senators and Assemblymen and Assemblywomen, after almost 12 years of amending, planning, theorizing and fact checking, the Paid Family Leave Insurance Bill has finally receives approval and passes through the Senate and Assembly.

Since the bill underwent changes while in the Assembly hearings that were not included in the bill passed by the Senate, the amended version must go back to the Senate for final passage.

Originally, this was supposed to occur on Monday, March 17th, however due to legal technicalities, this vote has been postponed.

Senate Majority Leader Stephen Sweeney and Assemblyman Nelson Albano -- prime sponsors of legislation (A873 / S786) released the following joint statement:

"Following the advice that Legislative Counsel under the Office of Legislative Services gave to both houses, the Assembly took the step Thursday of substituting A873 for S786 since the state constitution requires all bills related to revenues to originate in the General Assembly.

"Subsequent to the initial guidance given by OLS, a different opinion has been offered to the minority party -- adding procedural uncertainty to the situation.

"While we steadfastly believe in the validity of our actions -- based on the initial advice of OLS -- we will err of the side of caution. We have respectfully asked the Senate President not to put the paid family leave bill before the Senate for a final vote on Monday.

"This bill is simply too important to be jeopardized by legal confusion.

New Law Offers Enhanced Military FMLA Leave

On January 28, 2008 President Bush signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 which includes two provisions that expand the benefits of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to assist service members and their families.

One provision, called "Caregiver Leave", entitles eligible family members to take up to 26

weeks of unpaid leave to care for a service member spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin who incurred a serious injury or illness while on active duty. The service member must be unable to perform the duties and responsibilities called upon them in the service, undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, an outpatient or on temporary disability retired list.

The Family Medical Leave Act amendments to include "Caregiver Leave" became effective as soon as President Bush signed them into law and employers should be implementing the new provisions.

This Caregiver Leave is only available during a single 12-month period.



Profile of Older Americans: 2007

(From Administration on Aging, HHS)

- The older population (65+) numbered 37.3 million in 2006, an increase of 3.4 million or 10% since 1996.
- The number of Americans aged 45-64 increased by 39% during this decade.
- Persons reaching age 65 have an average life expectancy of an additional 18.7 years.
- Older women outnumber older men at 21.6 million women to 15.7 million men.
- In 2006, 19% of persons 65+ were minorities.
- About 30% (10.7 million) of noninstitutionalized older persons live alone. Half of older women age 75+ live alone.
- About 45,000 grandparents 65+ were primary guardians of their grandchildren.
- The population 65+ will rise from 35 million in 2000 to 40 million in 2010 (15%), and to 55 million in 2020 (36%).
- The 85+ population is projected to increase from 4.2 million in 2006 to 6.1 million in 2010, a 40% increase, then to 7.3 million in 2020, another 44% increase.
- Social Security constituted 90% or more of the income received by 34% of all SS beneficiaries.
- About 3.4 million elderly persons are below the poverty level.
- About 11% (3.7 million) of older Medicare enrollees received personal care from a paid or unpaid source in 1999.

Save these Dates!

“Supporting Rural Family Caregivers” Satellite Broadcast

March 19, 2008, 1:00 - 3:30PM (Est.)

Discuss challenges faced by rural family caregivers and possible solutions, as well as a panel of professionals as well as family caregivers.

Register now at registration.casals.com/cms

* * *

A Troubling Abundance of Care: (Over-treatment at the End of Life) Stockton College of NJ, Pomona May 12, 2008, 8:00AM - 5:00PM

Keynote Speaker: Arthur Caplan, Ph.D.
Medical, Communication, Religious and Cultural
Issues Affecting Medical Treatment

Register now at www.stockton.edu/hshs



To learn more about CNJ
contact Dana Goldberg

732-262-8020

dgoldberg@familyresourcenetwork.org
www.njcaregivers.org

Spotlight On...



Caring Bridge is a website created to allow individuals to create their own, free, personalized webpage that supports and connects loved ones during critical illness, treatment and recovery. This website's authors quickly and easily create personalized websites that display journal entries and photographs and well-wishers can visit the site to read updates and leave messages in the Guestbook.

The concept was formed when Sona Mehring, founder and executive director, had a friend with a life threatening pregnancy. Mehring built a small website to ease communication

and provide emotional support for the mother's family and friends. The ability for the family to post daily news about mom and baby proved a great asset in comforting and easing the pain of the situation.

While the premature infant unfortunately passed away at 9 days old, a memorial fund, created in Brigid's memory, enabled Children's Hospital in St. Paul to dedicate a computer and Internet access for patients and families wishing to create their own online communities, and so, Caring-Bridge.com was born. Now, 10 years later, Caring Bridge has some fascinating statistics!

90,000 personalized websites have been created and over 40 countries around the world are utilizing this resource. Incredibly, there have been over 523 million site visitors and over 13 million guestbook messages of support.

Every free, personalized Caring Bridge website includes a patient care journal to update family and friends, a guestbook for messages of love, a photo gallery and free online support for using the service.

To learn more or set up a Caring Bridge site, please visit caring-bridge.org.