Today’s Agenda

Welcome & Overview of Today’s Call:
- Meredith Deviney, Easter Seals Dixon Center
- Thank You to Partner Organizations
- Caregiver Welcome
  - Elizabeth Dole Foundation Fellow, Rosie Babin (Texas)
- Guest Speaker
  - Gail Hunt, National Alliance for Caregiving
  - Tonya Lok, A Caring Hand
- Online Q & A
  - VA Caregiver Support Program, Michelle Stefanelli, National Program Manager
- Thank You and Next Steps
Thank you to Our Partners!

– Atlas Research
– Caregiver Action Network
– Family Caregiver Alliance
– National Alliance for Caregiving - Today’s Host!
– Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving
– USO

Supported by Newman’s Own Foundation
Rosie Babin (Texas):

In March 2003 PFC Alan “Doc” Babin Jr., a combat medic with the 82nd Airborne Division, was on the medical ship USNS Comfort in the Persian Gulf. Alan was shot in the abdomen while running to the aid of a fallen comrade in Samawah, Iraq. The bullet tore a hole the size of a football and destroyed 90 percent of Alan’s stomach. His spleen, pancreas and small intestine were damaged and he was paralyzed from the neck down. The life of Alan’s mother, Rosie, would change forever as she and her husband, Alan, Sr., became Alan’s caregivers overnight.

Alan spent the next two years in four different hospitals across the United States. He endured more than 70 operations and suffered numerous infections. Revisiting her plans for retirement, Rosie spent that time in the hospital learning how to become a full-time caregiver for her son.
Today Rosie advises that using all available resources is crucial when caring for a loved one with such severe injuries. “To be the best caregiver possible to Alan, I need to be surrounded by a team. With the right team, I can focus on being a good mother, wife, sister, aunt and friend which, in turn, makes me a good caregiver.”

Rosie also believes it is important to stay connected with other caregivers. “We not only support each other, we learn from each other… these are blessed relationships of no explanation, no expectation and no judgment.”

fellows@elizabethdolefoundation.org
Caregiving as an Older Adult

Gail Gibson Hunt
President & CEO, National Alliance for Caregiving
November 5, 2015

@NA4Caregiving
• 501(c)(3) non-profit coalition founded in 1996
• Our mission is to advance family caregiving through research, innovation, and advocacy
• Activities include conducting public policy research, building state/local caregiving coalitions, & increasing awareness of family caregiving issues in the U.S. & around the world

NAC President & CEO Gail Gibson Hunt presenting at the White House Conference on Aging Caregiving Summit on May 18, 2015 (pictured at center)

www.caregiving.org
Today’s Presentation

• What We Know About Older Caregivers
• Caring for an Older Veteran
• Helpful Resources

What We Know About Older Adult Caregivers
Caregivers Over 50 – Spouses & Parents

Comparison of Spousal vs. Parental 50+ Caregivers

Caring for Spouse Age 50+

Who?
68-year-old white unemployed female, currently providing care for 44.4 hours a week for an average of 5.6 years without other unpaid help

Caring for?
71-year-old male spouse who had surgery/wounds or heart disease

Impact?
Helps with more ADLs (2.2), IADLs (5.3), and more likely to help with medical/nursing tasks (83%), and have a high burden of care (73%)

Caring for Parent/Parent-in-Law Age 50+

Who?
48-year-old employed daughter, currently providing care for 23.9 hours a week for an average of 4.0 years with other unpaid help

Caring for?
77-year-old mother or mother-in-law who has "old age" issues, Alzheimer's, or mobility problems

Impact?
More likely to help with arranging services (37%). Helps with 4.3 IADLs More likely wanting information about financial help

The “Typical” Caregiver Age 75+

- 78.9-year-old woman, caring for an adult, typically a 77.1-year-old close relative (spouse, adult child, or sibling) who needs care because of a long-term physical condition
- This caregiver has provided care for 5.6 years on average
- Spends 34 hours a week assisting with 1.5 ADLs, 4.5 IADLS, and medical or nursing tasks

More on Caregivers 75+

• Typically, the older caregiver does not work
• She or he is married or living with a partner and is in very good or good health
• She or he has taken some college courses (no degree), or has a college degree of some sort (associate’s, bachelor’s, or higher)
• Average household income is $52,600

Challenges for Older Caregivers

• Isolation/Emotional Stress: The older caregiver typically feels she had no choice in taking on care for her loved one.

• May need assistance providing care or helping with Activities of Daily Living

• May have individual health needs that need support in addition to the loved one

What Do We Know About Caregivers of Veterans?
Caregivers of Veterans (2010)

- 96% are female
- 70% provide care to spouse or partner
- 80% live in same household
- 41% of the veterans are between 18-54
- 24% of the youngest veterans are being cared for by parents – potential problem in future
- 30% were caring for veteran 10 years or more

Caregivers of Veterans (2010)

- Conditions include: depression/anxiety (70%), PTSD (60%), TBI (29%), Diabetes (28%), and paralysis or spinal cord injury (20%)
- Caregivers reported increase stress/anxiety (88%) and sleep deprivation (77%)
- 60% exercise less, have poorer eating habits and miss doctor or dentist visits

• Employed caregivers report they reduced their hours of work (62%)
• 47% either stopped work or took early retirement
• 50% of caregivers indicated a high degree of financial hardship

New Data on Caregiving Vets (2015)

- 15% of all caregivers are caring for a Veteran.
- Most Vets are in 65+ age group, with long-term physical conditions and living nearby, mostly parents and spouses.
- About one-third of caregivers are providing more than 20 hrs/week care.
- Nearly half of caregivers say they have a high burden of care; half had no choice.

Caring for an Older Veteran
In addition to being older, caregivers of Veterans have specific challenges:

• Not knowing what to expect medically with the veteran’s condition
• Unaware of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services’ abilities to help
• Not knowing how to address PTSD or mental illness
• Difficulty getting through bureaucracies in order to obtain services
Helpful Resources
Helpful Resources

• VA Caregiver Website: caregiver.va.gov
• Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255
• My HealtheVet - Personal Health Records
• Long-Term Care & Community-Based Services, va.gov/Geriatrics
• National Family Caregiver Support Program, Lifespan Respite
• Eldercare Locator: 1-800-677-1116
• Disease Specific Organizations, like the Alzheimer’s Association or National MS Society

Thank you!

Gail Gibson Hunt
President and CEO
National Alliance for Caregiving
gailhunt@caregiving.org
Tonya Lok
Client Service Manager
A Caring Hand
## Caregiver Stress Check Up

Do you experience any of these signs of stress?

- Anger
- Social Withdrawal
- Anxiety
- Denial
- Depression
- Exhaustion
- Sleeplessness
- Irritability
- Lack of Concentration
- Health Problems

When you are taking care of someone else, it is important not to neglect your own physical, mental and emotional well-being. If you don’t take care of your own needs you might be putting your health at risk.

Source: www.alz.org/care
10 Ways to Manage Stress and be a Healthier Caregiver

1. **Get help and find support** – reach out to your family, friends and people who can relate to what you are going through. Find a support group in your area. Every organization has one.

2. **Know what community resources are available** – You are not alone! Look for in-home care assistance from a reputable agency. Adult Day programs, and meal delivery services or grocery delivery services are just a few examples.

3. **Become an educated caregiver** – learn all there is to know about what you are caring for. Every disease and disorder has an organization behind. For instance Alz.org has wonderful resources if who you are caring for has dementia or Alzheimer’s.

4. **Find time for yourself** – consider respite care so you can spend time for yourself.

Source: www.alz.org/care
5. **Manage your level of stress** – Keep an eye on yourself too and note any symptoms. High blood pressure, lack of concentration, irritability – these are all signs that you might be too stressed out. Find a relaxation technique that works for you!

6. **Make legal and financial plans** – Having these future plans in place can provide comfort to the entire family. Ask for legal help if you need it. Find an attorney who practices elder law or a financial planner who is familiar with the situation (long-term care) you are dealing with.

7. **Accept changes as they occur** – As the disease or disability progresses we may need more help than what we can provide.
8. **Take care of yourself** – we cannot care for others unless we are caring for ourselves. Get plenty of rest, eat well, try to make time to exercise. Get your regular checkups and be aware of what your body is telling you.

9. **Have a back up plan** – What happens to the loved one you are caring for if YOU get sick? Whether it’s installing a Lifeline or Life Alert system or putting a name on a skilled nursing facility wait list, or making arrangements with another family member, having that plan will give you peace of mind.

10. **Know that you are doing your best!** Feeling guilty because you can’t do more is normal. The care that you provide makes a difference! Asking for help when you need it is just as important.
VA Caregiver Support Program

www.caregiver.va.gov

(855) 260-3274
Military Caregivers Webinar Series

– Stay tuned – Spanish webinar scheduled for **November 12th** on the topic of “When Sadness Becomes Depression.”
– Handouts, recording, & transcript to be posted to www.easterseals.com/carewebinar
– Contact: militarycaregiver@easterseals.com with any questions
– Will keep you apprised of future webinars and new partner resources