

Addressing caregiver burnout



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According to the “Caregiving in the U.S. 2020” report from the National Alliance for Caregiving and the American Association of Retired Persons, there was a 9.5 million increase in the number of family caregivers in the United States from 2015 to 2020. The study also revealed that more than 1 in 5 Americans are now family caregivers, and most of these caregivers are in worse health than they were five years ago.

As a caregiver, it is extremely important to manage your own health first and foremost, though we understand that is easier said than done. Caregiving can be rewarding; however, it is very challenging and can take a toll in the long term. Too

often, the caregiver will focus on others and neglect his or her own care, leading to physical, mental and emotional health issues. Like a domino effect, there is then a decline in the quality of care provided to the patient.

Many professionals call this situation caregiver burnout. Symptoms may include minimal energy, fatigue, stress, anxiety or change in attitude. Simply put, it is when you become physically, emotionally and mentally exhausted.

So, what do you do when you reach this point? First, never feel embarrassed or guilty about speaking with a health professional. Although you may not feel it at the time, real strength is acknowledging your need for help, and making someone aware of the problem.

And the good news is: Help is closer than you think.

Help from your home or office—High Option Plan

If you need help for an acute but non-emergency medical condition such as the flu, sinus problems, allergies, abrasions or minor wounds, virtual doctor visits are available through NALCHBP’s telehealth program. Download the mobile app, visit nalchbptelehealth.org or call 888-541-7706.

Additionally, the Plan offers outpatient Telemental Health service through Optum®. Telemental Health provides convenient access to virtual visits for mental health assessments and mental health treatments from the convenience of your home or office. Providers include psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. To locate an in-network telemental health provider, call 877-468-1016 or visit liveandworkwell.com.

Live and Work Well

The NALC Health Benefit High Option Plan offers exten-

sive member resources at liveandworkwell.com. Members have confidential access to information and tools developed by doctors, clinicians and industry experts. The Live and Work Well website portal focuses on mind-body integration for a practical approach to wellness and well-being. This link empowers members to find answers to day-to-day challenges on their own terms and based on their own schedules.

The website’s wealth of resources and information on health and wellness helps members manage chronic diseases, as well as find ways to alleviate stress and take charge of their overall health and wellbeing.

Solutions for Caregivers—High Option Plan

Additionally, when enrolled in the NALC Health Benefit High Option Plan, there are resources through the Solutions for Caregivers program. This program provides six hours of care-management services at no additional cost per calendar year.

Members also have the option of purchasing continuing services beyond the six hours offered if needed. Solutions for Caregivers provides members with access to a care advocate, a registered nurse with geriatric, disability and community health experience, to help ensure that your loved one maintains a safe, healthy lifestyle. Specialists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Solutions for Caregivers can:

- Counsel you on your loved one’s individual, medical, financial, safety, emotional and social needs.
- Conduct an on-site assessment and develop a personalized care plan.
- Connect you with professionals, including home health aides, nurses, lawyers and financial advisors.
- Offer assistance in a crisis situation when you don’t know where else to turn.

Whether it is arranging transportation to doctor’s appointments, explaining insurance options, having safety equipment installed, or coordinating care with multiple providers, the care advocate will help ensure that your elderly relative or disabled dependent maintains a safe and healthy lifestyle.

For questions or to learn more about this program, you can call 877-468-1016. You also can access educational resources and discounted products and services at UHCforCaregivers.com/welcom/nalchbp. Please use the code NALCHBP when creating an account.

“Be there for others, but never leave yourself behind.”—Dodinsky