

## **Handle with care**

### ***The rapidly growing need for family caregiver benefits***

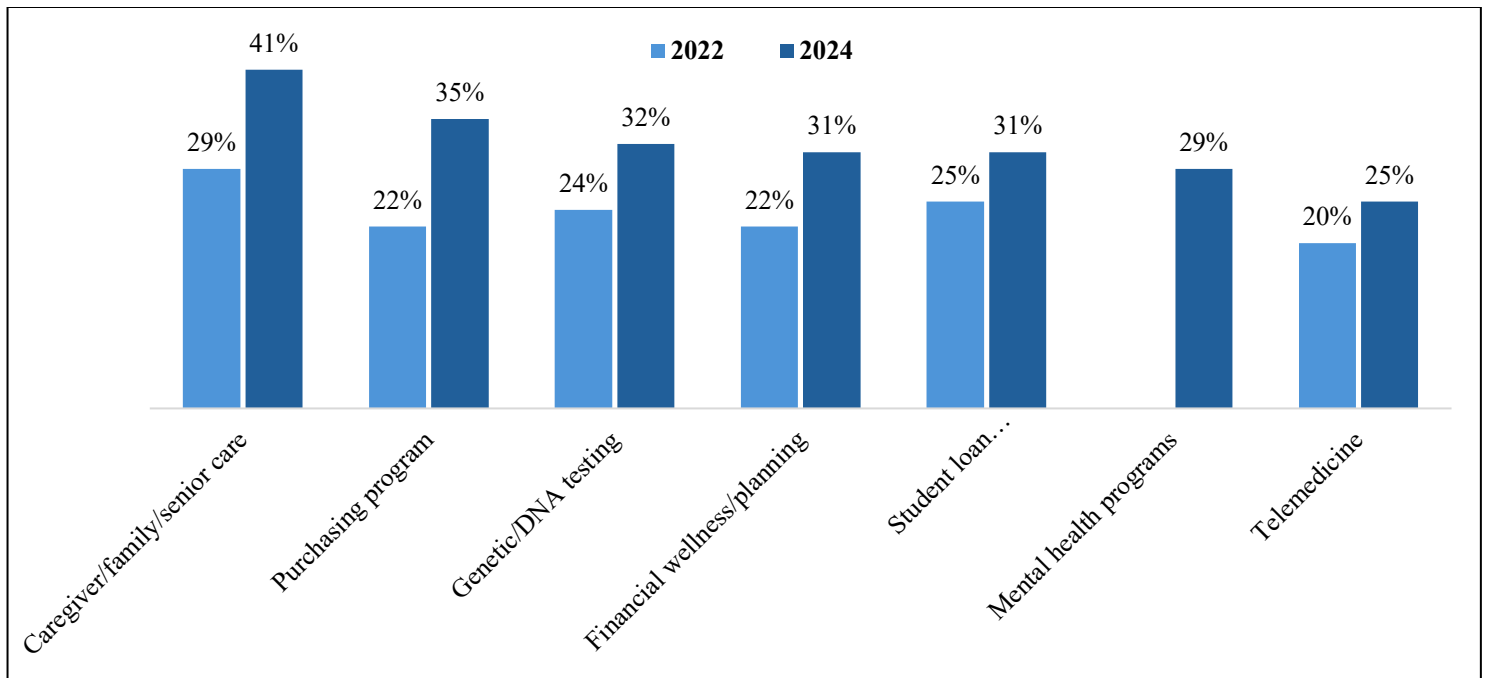
Some people call it a “secret second job” — but it’s really not that much of a secret. Research published by [Forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com) estimates 73% of employees also spend the equivalent of a part-time job — 20 to 30 hours a week — on family caregiving, a number up dramatically in just the last few years, according to Forbes.

That includes about 53 million adults (one in five Americans) who help older relatives, spouses, friends or neighbors with daily tasks such as cooking and dressing, according to [seniorliving.org](https://www.seniorliving.org). Family caregivers are mostly working women who care for aging parents. The median age of caregivers in Senior Living’s study was 42, an age when most people are still in the workforce and many are also caring for children. Nearly half (47%) of caregivers receive no formal support, such as financial aid, counseling or respite care, despite 88% saying they need more help.

### **Employees want caregiver benefits**

No wonder then, employees show strong interest in gaining access to benefits for caregiver, family and senior care support from their employers. In fact, it tops employees’ list as the benefit their employers do not currently offer but they are most interested in acquiring. Eastbridge’s “Employee Demographic Details: Exploring Attitudes and Behaviors About Voluntary/Worksite Benefits” MarketVision™ — The Employee Viewpoint® report shows 41% of employees who don’t currently have access to caregiver benefits are interested in these benefits. Not only is this benefit mentioned most often by employees across all employer size groups, interest has grown significantly in just the past two years, up from 29% in 2022.

### **Growth in Employee Interest in Noninsurance Benefits Not Currently Offered by Employer**



Source: “Employee Demographic Details: Exploring Attitudes and Behaviors About Voluntary/Worksite Benefits” MarketVision™ — The Employer Viewpoint® report, Eastbridge Consulting Group, 2024 & 2022

Despite this strong interest, an average of only 24% of employees surveyed say their employers offer caregiver benefits, far fewer than offer mental health benefits (50%), telemedicine (43%) or financial wellness/planning benefits (39%). And even though interest has increased in the past two years, the number of employees who say they have access to caregiver benefits through their employer has actually dropped in the past two years, from 34% in the previous survey.

### Employer-employee disconnect?

Employers offer a variety of nontraditional benefit offerings, or plan to in the next few years. Those surveyed for the 2025 “Employer Size and Industry Demographics for the Voluntary/Worksite Market” MarketVision™ — The Employer Viewpoint® report most often offer mental health programs (48%), telemedicine (35%) and bereavement support (28%). But caregiver benefits rank near the bottom of the list, except for the largest employers with more than 10,000 employees. Only 14% of employers on average offer these benefits — half as many as just two years before, when 28% offered them.

However, it appears employers may be gaining a better understanding of their employees’ demand for caregiver benefits. It’s now the most common nontraditional benefit

employers say they plan to offer in the next one to two years at 26%, up from 21% in the previous survey. Even better news: Smaller employers are just as likely as large employers to say they plan to add caregiver/family/senior care programs to their benefit offering in the next one to two years.

### Other Benefits Employers Plan to Offer in Next 1–2 Years (2024)

Other Benefits	10–49 EEs	50–99 EEs	100–499 EEs	500–999 EEs	1,000–2,499 EEs	2,500–9,999 EEs	10,000+ EEs	Weighted Average
Caregiver/family/senior care	25%	25%	35%	38%	33%	37%	33%	<b>26%</b>
Financial wellness education/tools	23%	38%	31%	25%	30%	32%	35%	<b>25%</b>
Mental health programs/benefits	23%	28%	23%	19%	20%	25%	36%	<b>23%</b>
Purchasing program	19%	28%	20%	23%	22%	21%	29%	<b>20%</b>
Telemedicine	17%	32%	20%	24%	19%	27%	36%	<b>19%</b>
Bereavement support and services	15%	30%	19%	28%	31%	23%	38%	<b>17%</b>
Student loan repay/refinancing	15%	21%	16%	29%	43%	39%	44%	<b>16%</b>
Genetic/DNA testing	11%	25%	12%	22%	34%	26%	34%	<b>13%</b>
Estate and will planning services	9%	35%	20%	35%	29%	29%	37%	<b>13%</b>

Source: *Employer Size and Industry Demographics for the Voluntary/Worksite Market MarketVision™ — The Employer Viewpoint® reports, Eastbridge Consulting Group, 2025*

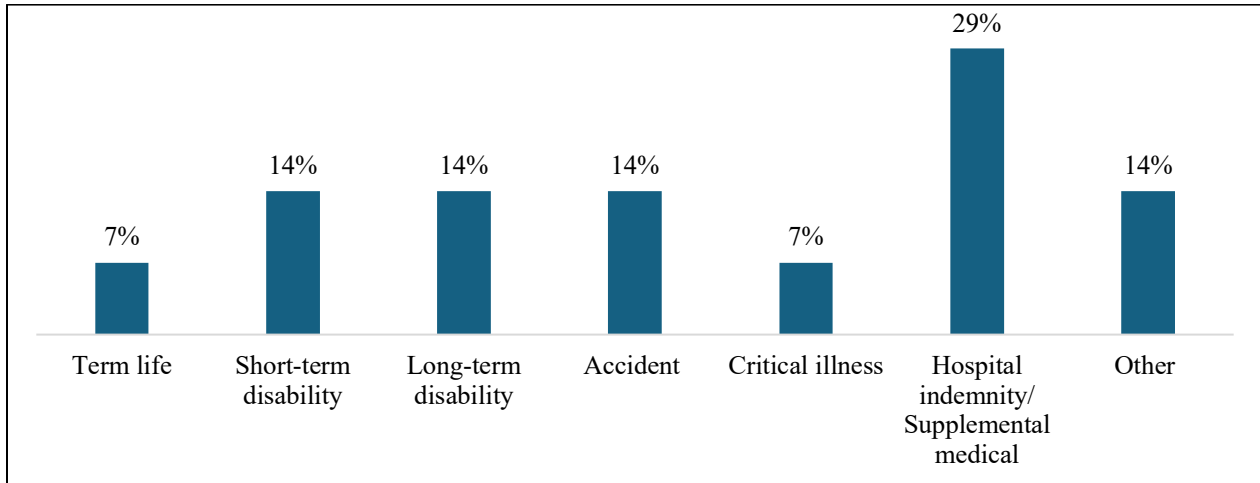
### Carrier support for caregiver benefits

For employers to meet their goals of providing greater access to caregiver benefits for their employees, voluntary benefit carriers may need to expand their offerings. The majority (64%) of carriers do not currently offer caregiving support benefits or services with their voluntary products, according to Eastbridge’s 2023 “Emerging Voluntary Benefits and Services” Frontline™ report, although another 9% of those surveyed planned to introduce them within the next year.

Carriers offering caregiver support services most often offer them as a benefit (63%), while 13% offer a value-added or discount program, and more than a third offer both. The most common type of caregiver support is a child care or family care benefit if insureds are hospitalized due to an illness or accident. Far less common are the kinds of benefits employees may need most: a family medical leave benefit to care for a parent, spouse or child; or an EAP program that addresses child care or elder care issues.

Hospital indemnity plans are the products most likely to include caregiving support services, followed by short-term disability, long-term disability and accident plans. A few carriers include caregiver benefits in their critical illness or term life products.

### Voluntary Products that Include Caregiving Support Benefit or Services



Source: *Emerging Voluntary Benefits and Services Frontline™ Report*, Eastbridge Consulting Group, 2023

The most common reason carriers cite for interest in caregiving support services is the aging population. Other reasons include the lasting effects of the pandemic, greater awareness of support and paid family medical leave programs, the effects of presenteeism, and more employees becoming caregivers.

The good news is most carriers surveyed expect the voluntary/worksite market will offer new products, benefits or services in the next two years to support caregivers. A few carriers say work flexibility will become more common, or coverage will be extended to parents or grandparents.

It's likely none too soon. Older adults are one of the fastest-growing groups in the country, and by 2040 more than 78 million Americans will be age 65 or older, according to the [National Council on Aging](#). The need for family caregiving — and employee benefits to support it — will only grow, too.

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