



## **The Growing Contributions and Cost of Family Caregiving**

Family support is critical to remaining in one's home and in the community, but often it comes at a substantial cost to caregivers themselves, to their families, and to society. If family caregivers were no longer available, the economic cost to the U.S. health care and long-term services and support systems would increase astronomically.

In 2009, about 42.1 million family caregivers in the U.S. provided care to an adult with limitations in daily activities at any given point in time, and about 61.6 million provided care at some time during the year. The estimated economic value of their unpaid contributions was approximately \$450 billion in 2009, up from an estimated \$375 billion in 2007.

Family members often undertake caregiving willingly, and many find it a source of deep satisfaction and meaning. Caregiving can have a significant impact on the family members who provide care. The "average" U.S. caregiver is a 49-year-old woman who works outside the home and spends nearly 20 hours per week providing unpaid care to her mother for nearly five years. Two-thirds of family caregivers are female (65 percent). More than eight in ten are caring for a relative or friend age 50 or older.

*From AARP Public Policy Institute*