

Series Topics

- The changing face of workforce demographics
- Myths about older workers
- Multi-generational interaction at the workplace
- Elder care benefits
- Leveraging the changing demographics
- Marketing to the older consumer

All newsletter issues are available as PDFs at <http://www.uni.edu/iacagorg/business.htm>

Please contact us with comments, questions or suggestions...

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This information is part of a series of brief publications from the Iowa Consortium for Applied Gerontology (IaCAG) located at the University of Northern Iowa. It is designed to raise awareness about the aging population in Iowa and how these changes may impact businesses, employees, and consumers.

Elder Care Benefits

Quick Facts

- Approximately 77 million people in the US are Baby Boomers.¹
- The 85+ population is projected to increase from 4.6 million in 2002 to 9.6 million in 2030.²
- Labor force growth is expected to slow from 1.1% per year in the 1990s to 0.36% per year from 2010 to 2020.³
- In just three years (1999-2002), working Iowans between ages of 45 and 54 increased from 19% to 21%.³

Elder Care: An Important Issue

- One of the big issues facing the Baby Boomer generation is caring for their aging parents.
- By the end of this decade, roughly one in ten employed workers in the U.S., 11-15.6 million employees, will be caregivers according to a 1999 MetLife Foundation estimate.⁴
- A survey conducted by the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP (1997) reported that approximately 23% of U.S. households with telephones were involved in caregiving, and 51.8% of these caregivers were full-time employees.⁵

Impact on Businesses

- The physical and emotional costs of caregiving are likely to influence the caregivers' productivity at work.
- The strain caused from being a caregiver has the potential to ultimately affect the bottom line of businesses.
- To achieve a highly efficient workforce, companies can add elder care benefits to their EAP programs.

Sources:

1. <http://www.metlife.com/WPSAssets/84324382701071068242V1FPre-Retirees.pdf>
2. <http://www.aoa.gov/prof/Statistics/statistics.asp>
3. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/led-ow-ia.pdf>
4. <http://www.metlife.com/WPSAssets/14850762581045242106V1FJuggling%20Act%20Study.pdf>
5. <http://www.metlife.com/WPSAssets/14002396171048285176V1FEmployer%20Costs%20study%20.pdf>

Elder Care Benefits for Employees: The Smart Choice

Approximately 77 million people in the US are Baby Boomers, and this generation will be reaching the retirement age at a rapid rate in the next decade.¹ Labor force growth is also expected to slow from 1.1% per year in the 1990s to 0.36% per year from 2010 to 2020.³ According to Local Employment Dynamics, in just three years (1999-2002), working Iowans ages 45-54 increased from 19% to 21%, and workers age 65+ increased from 3.1% to 3.4 %, while workers age 14-44 decreased from 69% to 65%.³ These numbers point to the fact that the Baby Boomer generation is a vital part of the labor force today, and in order to keep them engaged, employers should provide incentives and benefits that appeal to this age group.

It is also projected that the 85+ population will increase from 4.6 million in 2002 to 9.6 million in 2030.² Due to an increase in average life expectancy, one of the big issues facing the Baby Boomer generation is caring for their aging parents. Providing elder care can take a significant amount of time, and it has the potential to ultimately affect the bottom line of businesses employing the baby boomer workforce.

What kind of elder care benefits can businesses provide?

Employee benefits packages that include long-term care insurance⁴

Referrals to community resources such as caregiver support groups, educational programs, and the Area Agency on Aging⁴

Benefits such as flex-time, job-sharing, or compressed work weeks⁴

Other benefits such as free or subsidized adult day services⁴

Information about statewide resources such as the Iowa Family Caregiver program-
1-866-468-7887 (1-866-4-NURTURE) or
www.iowafamilycaregiver.org

A recent study by AARP found that employees are reluctant to talk about elder care issues at work because they fear a negative impact on their careers. As a sound business policy, and to achieve a highly efficient workforce through maintaining high job-satisfaction levels among employees, companies may want to consider adding elder care benefits to their Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) programs. Benefits such as part-time work, job sharing, flex-time, telecommuting, etc., may allow the Boomer generation to care for their aging parents while maintaining their responsibilities at work.⁴ Such measures will convey a message that the organization is concerned about their employees and will aid in maintaining long-term wellness of the workforce over time.

IaCAG has been working actively with prominent regional businesses to create further awareness of this and other issues concerning management of an aging workforce and consumer base.

Visit our website at <http://www.iacag.org> for more information on other aging issues

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