Hidden Heroes

The Importance of Caregivers to the Health and Well-Being of the Veteran
Senator Elizabeth Dole was inspired to launch the Foundation in early 2012 after she saw first-hand the struggles of the spouses, parents, and other loved ones caring for wounded, ill and injured warriors at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.
To strengthen and empower American military caregivers and their families by raising public awareness, driving research, championing policy, and leading collaborations that make a significant impact on their lives.

Fundamental Principles:

- Conduct evidence-based research on the needs of military and veteran caregivers
- Empower caregivers
- Drive innovation
- Promote collaboration
- Raise awareness
Five core programs drive the mission of the Foundation:

1. Impact Councils
2. National Coalition
3. Dole Caregiver Fellows Program
4. Hidden Heroes Caregiver Community
5. Hidden Heroes Fund
Measuring the Crisis

• The Foundation commissioned the RAND Corporation to conduct the first nationwide, comprehensive study of America’s military and veteran caregivers.

• The goals of the study were to:
  • Describe the magnitude of military caregivers in the U.S.
  • Describe current policies, programs, and other initiatives designed to support military caregivers
  • Identify specific recommendations for filling gaps in support

For more information: www.rand.org/military-caregivers
CAREGIVERS GIVING CARE TO PEOPLE WHO SERVED

**pre-9/11** differ from **post-9/11**

**the child**
- Caregiver is most commonly employed: 47%
- Percentage of caregivers with a support network: 71%
- Percentage of caregivers age 30 or younger: 11%

**RECIPIENTS**
- Care recipients who have a behavioral health condition: 36%
- Percentage of care recipients who have a VA disability rating: 30%

**the spouse**
- Percentage of caregivers employed: 63%
- Percentage of caregivers with a support network: 47%
- Percentage of caregivers age 30 or younger: 37%

**RECIPIENTS**
- Care recipients who have a behavioral health condition: 64%
- Percentage of care recipients who have a VA disability rating: 58%

Medical conditions of care recipients in the United States

- **Traumatic brain injury**: 20% (Post-9/11), 10% (Pre-9/11), 10% (Civilian)
- **Hearing/vision problem**: 57% (Post-9/11), 56% (Pre-9/11), 38% (Civilian)
- **Mobility-limiting disability**: 80% (Post-9/11), 75% (Pre-9/11), 66% (Civilian)
- **Chronic condition**: 35% (Post-9/11), 77% (Pre-9/11), 63% (Civilian)
- **Neurological condition**: 6% (Post-9/11), 31% (Pre-9/11), 29% (Civilian)
- **Mental health/substance use**: 64% (Post-9/11), 36% (Pre-9/11), 33% (Civilian)

% of care recipients

Activities of daily living performed by caregivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Post-9/11</th>
<th>Pre-9/11</th>
<th>Civilian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting into/out of chair</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressing</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toileting</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathing</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with incontinence/diapers</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any ADL</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrumental activities of daily living performed by caregivers

- Administering meds/pills/injections
  - Post-9/11: 38% (39%), Pre-9/11: 47% (47%), Civilian: 61% (61%)
- Managing finances
  - Post-9/11: 56% (56%), Pre-9/11: 64% (64%), Civilian: 73% (74%)
- Grocery shopping
  - Post-9/11: 52% (52%), Pre-9/11: 73% (74%), Civilian: 73% (74%)
- Housework
  - Post-9/11: 59% (59%), Pre-9/11: 67% (67%), Civilian: 72% (72%)
- Preparing meals
  - Post-9/11: 44% (44%), Pre-9/11: 59% (59%), Civilian: 66% (66%)
- Transportation
  - Post-9/11: 40% (40%), Pre-9/11: 69% (69%), Civilian: 76% (76%)
- Arranging/supervising paid services
  - Post-9/11: 14% (14%), Pre-9/11: 33% (33%), Civilian: 41% (41%)
- Coordinating medical care/rehab services
  - Post-9/11: 39% (39%), Pre-9/11: 48% (48%), Civilian: 56% (56%)
- Administering physical/medical therapies/treatments
  - Post-9/11: 36% (36%), Pre-9/11: 44% (44%), Civilian: 79% (79%)
- Any IADL
  - Post-9/11: 33% (33%), Pre-9/11: 44% (44%), Civilian: 79% (79%), Civilian: 94% (96%)

“I have to be sure that I am speaking slowly and clearly - he has difficulty hearing speech properly if I am not speaking directly to his face. Due to hearing loss, he often speaks louder then the social situation requires, and I will give him clues if this is happening. He has been offered a hearing aid for his right ear but doesn't want to use them - feels he is too young.”

“…it has taken a long time for my veteran to adjust to his hearing loss, he still gets frustrated and even "shuts down" when he can't hear or I have to help him hear or he has to have things repeated.”

“I noticed [his] hearing loss long before he had it addressed. He did do several hearing tests but it did not become noticeable to him until a few years after retirement.”

“I was told…that he does not need me at his appointments because he is a “big boy”. This is not true, he misses a lot due to hearing loss (he also has memory loss from an injury). It’s not just appointments where he needs my help to hear, but in many other aspects. This has been a concern of ours for when he is finished with school and enters the work force.”
How Can You Help?

Service Providers:
- Acknowledge the caregiver
- Engage with them as an integral part of the care team
- Share educational resources to help them care at home

Veterans:
- Reaffirm that the caregiver is part of your care team
  - “I need my caregiver here.”

Caregivers:
- Introduce yourself!
- Address questions/comments/concerns at the right moment
- Be politely persistent
- Know your rights as a caregiver
The Hidden Heroes Campaign

Led by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation with support from its National Coalition of partners, Hidden Heroes brings vital attention to the untold stories of military caregiving and seeks solutions for the tremendous challenges and long-term needs caregivers face.

Our goals for the Hidden Heroes Campaign are threefold: raising public awareness and inspiring civic engagement for this caregiving crisis, identifying these hidden heroes by creating a national military caregiver registry, and connecting military caregivers to a continuum of support and vetted resources.
“Unseen and undefined, there are millions of heroes who are caring for our wounded veterans each day. I join with Senator Dole in this important national campaign to make us all aware of these hidden heroes—to acknowledge what they do and to connect them to valuable resources and helpful support.”

– Tom Hanks
1. This new, first-of-its-kind Hidden Heroes website makes it easy for loved ones to identify themselves as military caregivers and engage in a compassionate community of their peers.

2. As part of the Foundation’s mission to offer a continuum of care, caregivers of all war eras can interact with their peers in a safe, social, structured support network.

3. Additionally, military caregivers will have access to a vetted directory of valuable resources from the Foundation and our National Coalition Partners and offer critical support, such as:
   - Mental and Physical Health Services
   - Financial and Legal Assistance
   - Respite Care Services
   - Caregiver Training and Employment
   - Tools for Coping with Invisible Wounds

To learn more go to www.HiddenHeroes.org
How Can You Get Involved?

1. Visit the “Take Action” tab on HiddenHeroes.org
2. Share our PSA and HiddenHeroes.org with the military families in your community.
3. Encourage military caregivers to sign up on the caregiver registry.
4. Speak to the leaders in your community about Hidden Heroes, and ask if they know of any military caregivers who need help.
5. Search our resource directory and contact an organization in your area to see if they need volunteers.
6. Are you a military caregiver? Apply for our Fellowship today!

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