

## **YOU, THE CAREGIVER**

### **Topic #10: Balancing Work and Caregiving**

**According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services there are approximately 44 million Americans who are informal caregivers. Of those, 61 percent are women. About half of the 44 million Americans have jobs.**

**A recent study by the National Alliance for Caregiving and the AARP found that most employers are sympathetic to the demands placed on employees who are caregivers. However, employees are typically reluctant to discuss their caregiving responsibilities with their supervisors because they fear it will affect their job security or career prospects.**

**In 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) made it possible for eligible workers to take up to 12 weeks a year of unpaid leave for family caregiving without loss of job security or health benefits.**

**Coping With Demands On Your Time: On average, caregivers provide about 20 hours of assistance a week to a loved one. Caregiving responsibilities combined with the demands of a job can be very stressful and, at times, overwhelming. But there are some things you can do to help manage these demands:**

- Talk openly and honestly with your supervisor about your care giving responsibilities. Ask what options you might have available to you.**
- Find out what your company policy is regarding caregiving. Depending on the size of your company and how long you have been employed, you may be eligible for up to 12 weeks unpaid leave.**
- Investigate the possibility of job sharing or working part time.**
- If your company offers flex-time, take advantage of it. Some companies are glad to have employees work less desirable hours such as evenings or weekends.**

- **Set priorities both at work and at home and be realistic about what can be accomplished in your daily routine.**
- **Take advantage of community resources such as volunteer groups, church support groups, or home health care services.**

**The most important thing you can do as a caregiver is to take care of yourself! It's easy to neglect your own health and personal needs. At Meridian At Home we have developed some survivor tips to help you manage the demands of being a caregiver. ( Don't' forget to visit the [“Looking After Yourself!”](#) module for more information)**

If you have any questions about your health, or the continued health of your loved ones, contact us. Meridian At Home Advisors specialize in listening to your health care concerns and identifying the services and technologies that will allow you or a person close to you to continue to lead a healthy, independent life at home. Our advisors will gladly arrange for a registered nurse to conduct a free, in-home consultative assessment. Call us toll-free at 1-800-894-6885. You can also click on [Connect with Meridian At Home](#) to have one of our advisors contact you at a convenient time. Meridian At Home, Where you want to be.