



# Unready: The State of Preparedness of Future Caregivers

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# Background

- Informal caregiving is increasingly prevalent among working adults
- Estimates vary; BLS says 37.1 million caregivers over 15 in the US provided unpaid elder care in 2023
- There is much existing work on the caregiving experience (health, labor effects)
- The impacts are mixed – early doom and gloom has later given way to recognition of some positive emotional impacts, and local policy and labor markets play a role
- The US population is aging, bringing with it increased prevalence of aging-related diseases and disorders that require caregiving (e.g., ADRD)
- What do people know about the impacts of caregiving? Do they prepare for it?



# Terms and Concepts

- Formal vs informal care – who provides the care and is it paid?
- Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
- Inpatient vs outpatient/community-based – facilities, types
- Payment models
- Long-term care insurance
- Caregiving takes many forms and may or may not be an open-ended commitment



# Caregiving Readiness

Given the uncertain and potentially major personal impacts to caregiving, what do people know about caregiving?

- What is their actual and perceived risk of becoming a caregiver?
- What do they believe about how much caregiving costs?
- What do they expect about the availability of various resources, like paid care or support from their family?
- Are they taking any steps to prepare for caregiving?
- Do they believe they and their parents are ready for caregiving?



# Why parental caregiving?

- Family caregiving can involve an older adult, such as a parent, a peer, or a child
- Each has its own complexities
- Parental caregiving is uncertain, growing in probability, and can potentially impact working adults unexpectedly
- Caregiving for a child or peer is less common and less unexpected
- Each has significantly different policies and structures for support, as well as different challenges for negotiating care provision



# What did we do?

We fielded a survey last fall of US adults between 40 and 64 with at least 1 living parent--representative sample by race and gender.

- Final sample size: 1249
- We asked respondents if they are currently providing unpaid care to a parent or parent-in-law.
  - If not providing care, do they expect to provide care in the future?
- We have 543 current caregivers, 381 future caregivers, and 325 non-caregivers in total
- Current caregivers were given a set of questions asking them about their experience as caregivers
- Everyone else got a similar set of questions about hypothetical caregiving in the future

# Objectives

- We can compare current and possible caregivers to see whether expectations around caregiving are accurate reflections of the caregiving experience
- We can assess whether future caregivers are in some sense accurate around what they believe the costs and impacts of caregiving will be
- We can try to identify which aspects of caregiving are easier or harder for non-caregivers to predict
- We can see if the expectations around caregiving translate into concrete preparatory steps

# Summary Statistics



Variable	Total			Current Caregivers			Future Caregivers			Non-Caregivers		
	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD
Female(Yes=1)	0.63	1	0.48	0.63	1	0.48	0.61	1	0.49	0.66	1	0.47
Age	51.61	52	7.05	52.12	52	6.91	51.04	51	7.04	51.42	53	7.25
White	0.71	1	0.45	0.76	1	0.43	0.75	1	0.43	0.59	1	0.49
Black	0.11	0	0.32	0.09	0	0.29	0.08	0	0.28	0.19	0	0.39
Hispanic	0.10	0	0.31	0.10	0	0.29	0.09	0	0.29	0.13	0	0.34
Full-time Worker	0.58	1	0.49	0.65	1	0.48	0.61	1	0.49	0.44	0	0.50
Part-time Worker	0.08	0	0.28	0.07	0	0.26	0.10	0	0.30	0.08	0	0.28
Unemployed or Retired	0.33	0	0.47	0.28	0	0.45	0.29	0	0.45	0.48	0	0.50
Income < \$35,000	0.27	0	0.44	0.17	0	0.38	0.28	0	0.45	0.42	0	0.49
Income >=\$35,000, <\$50,000	0.20	0	0.40	0.19	0	0.39	0.19	0	0.40	0.22	0	0.42
Income >=\$50,000, <\$100,000	0.28	0	0.45	0.33	0	0.47	0.28	0	0.45	0.21	0	0.41
Income >=\$100,000	0.25	0	0.43	0.31	0	0.46	0.24	0	0.43	0.15	0	0.36
No Savings	0.20	0	0.40	0.15	0	0.36	0.17	0	0.38	0.29	0	0.46
Savings < \$10,000	0.27	0	0.44	0.24	0	0.43	0.29	0	0.45	0.29	0	0.45
Savings >=\$10,000, <\$100,000	0.22	0	0.41	0.24	0	0.43	0.22	0	0.42	0.18	0	0.39
Savings > \$100,000	0.24	0	0.43	0.29	0	0.45	0.26	0	0.44	0.14	0	0.35
Savings Unknown/Prefer Not to Say	0.08	0	0.26	0.07	0	0.26	0.06	0	0.04	0.10	0	0.30
Living Father, Stepfather, Father-in-	0.65	1	0.48	0.62	1	0.49	0.70	1	0.46	0.64	1	0.48
Living Mother, Stepmother, Mother-	0.89	1	0.32	0.91	1	0.28	0.88	1	0.33	0.85	1	0.36
Has sister(s)	0.70	1	0.46	0.69	1	0.46	0.70	1	0.46	0.72	1	0.45
Has brother(s)	0.67	1	0.47	0.67	1	0.47	0.64	1	0.48	0.69	1	0.46
Age of Oldest Parent Receiving Care	79.71	80	7.74	79.71	80	7.74	.	.	.	.	.	.
Duration of Caregiving in Years	4.59	3	6.31	4.59	3	6.31	.	.	.	.	.	.
Age of Older Living Parent	76.53	76	8.16	.	.	.	76.33	76	7.78	76.76	76	8.59
Age of Younger Living Parent	74.25	75	8.36	.	.	.	74.02	75	8.25	74.51	74	8.49
Count	1249	.	.	543	.	.	381	.	.	325	.	.

# Expectations of cost in terms of money and time

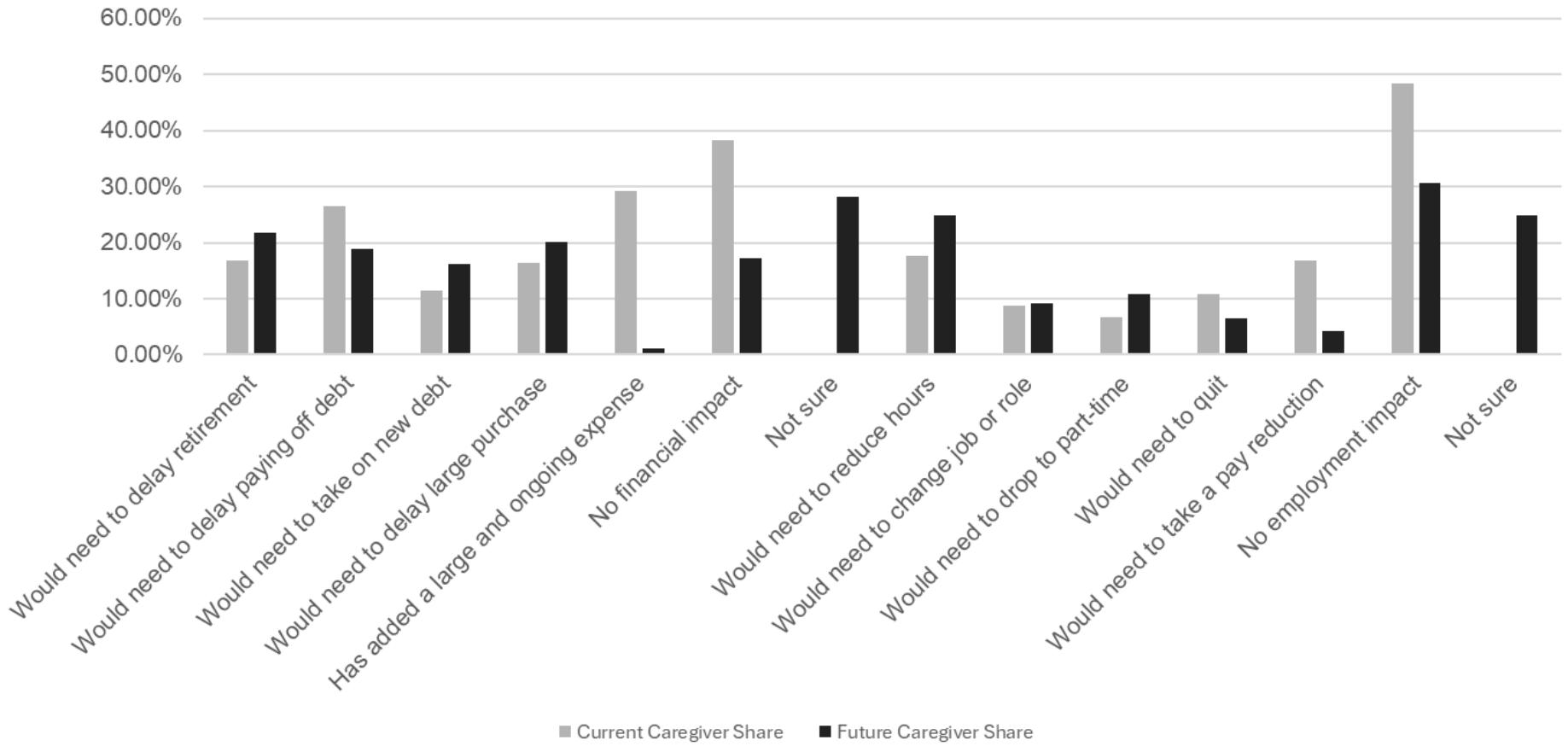
<b>Hours</b>	<b>Panel A</b>	
	<b>Current Caregiver</b>	<b>Future Caregiver</b>
<b>Share</b>	<b>Share</b>	
Less than 1 hour	2.21%	0.97%
At least than one but less than 3 hours	14.55%	12.58%
At least 3 but less than 10 hours	30.02%	30.00%
At least 10 but less than 20 hours	25.41%	24.52%
Over 20 hours	<b>26.34%</b>	<b>20.00%</b>
Not sure	<b>1.47%</b>	<b>11.94%</b>

<b>Monthly Out of Pocket Costs</b>	<b>Panel B</b>	
	<b>Current Caregiver</b>	<b>Future Caregiver</b>
<b>Share</b>	<b>Share</b>	
No cost	16.21%	13.91%
Less than \$100	<b>21.92%</b>	<b>9.71%</b>
At least \$100 but less than \$500	35.73%	32.81%
At least \$500 but less than \$1,000	<b>16.57%</b>	<b>10.24%</b>
At least \$1,000 but less than \$2,000	5.71%	6.82%
At least \$2,000 but less than \$3,000	<b>0.74%</b>	<b>2.89%</b>
At least \$3,000 but less than \$4,000	0.74%	0.52%
At least \$4,000 but less than \$5,000	0.00%	0.26%
Over \$5,000	0.18%	0.79%
Not sure	<b>2.21%</b>	<b>22.05%</b>

# Impacts of caregiving in terms of finances and employment

Figure 1: Share Reporting Negative Financial and Employment Impacts



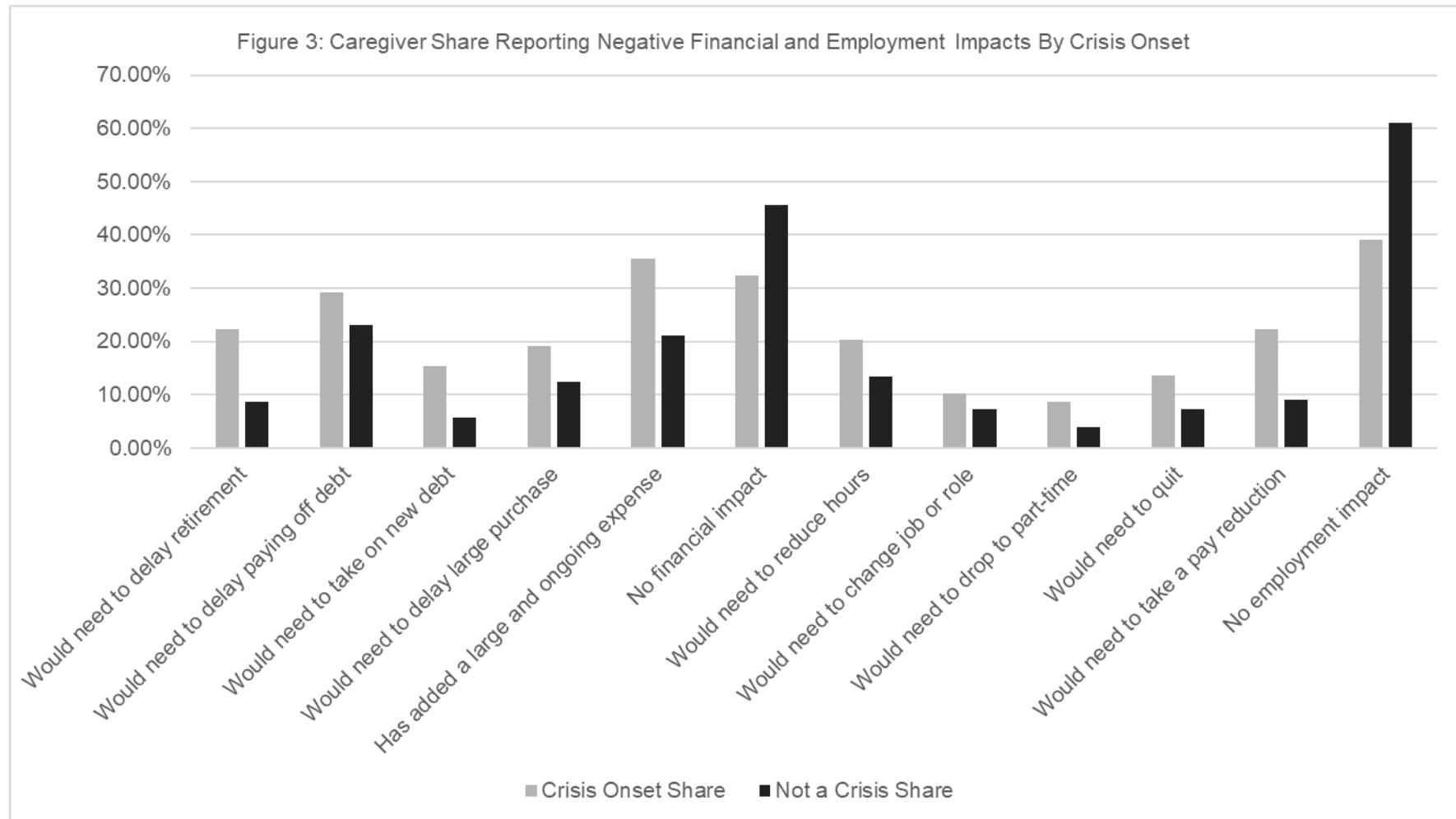
# What have your parents done?

Do your parents have...	Current Caregiver								Future Caregiver							
	Did		Didn't		Not sure		Did		Didn't		Not sure					
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
A caregiving plan	104	19.15%	384	70.72%	55	10.13%	85	22.31%	176	46.19%	120	31.50%				
A financial plan	206	37.94%	269	49.54%	68	12.52%	169	44.36%	104	27.30%	88	23.10%				
A will or estate plan	311	57.27%	192	35.36%	40	7.37%	237	62.20%	88	23.10%	56	14.70%				
A healthcare power of attorney	248	45.67%	235	43.28%	60	11.05%	159	41.73%	134	35.17%	88	23.10%				
Advanced directive	237	43.65%	248	45.67%	58	10.68%	153	40.16%	136	35.70%	92	24.15%				
Financial power of attorney	251	46.22%	245	45.12%	47	8.66%	171	44.88%	117	30.71%	93	24.41%				
Primary health insurance	410	75.51%	109	20.07%	24	4.42%	277	72.70%	60	15.75%	44	11.55%				
Supplemental health insurance	220	40.52%	281	51.75%	62	11.42%	156	40.94%	105	27.56%	120	31.50%				
Medicare	451	83.06%	72	13.26%	20	3.68%	283	74.28%	47	12.34%	51	13.39%				
Retiree Health Savings Plan	126	23.20%	331	60.96%	86	15.84%	79	20.73%	167	43.83%	135	35.43%				
Long-term care insurance	148	27.26%	318	58.56%	77	14.18%	140	36.75%	154	40.42%	123	32.28%				
Savings, retirement, and/or investment accounts	347	63.90%	159	29.28%	37	6.81%	253	66.40%	83	21.78%	45	11.81%				

# Planning and thinking about various financial goals

How much are you planning for/thinking about...	Current Caregiver						Future Caregiver					
	A lot/great deal		Not much/not at all		Not sure		A lot/great deal		Not much/not at all		Not sure	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Decline or death of a parent	443	81.58%	80	14.73%	40	7.37%	252	66.14%	104	27.30%	25	6.56%
Financing the care of a parent	394	72.56%	130	23.94%	19	3.50%	170	44.62%	174	45.67%	37	9.71%
Making time for care of a parent	502	92.45%	36	6.63%	5	0.92%	222	58.27%	122	32.02%	37	9.71%
Buying or financing a new home	343	63.17%	282	51.93%	51	9.39%	251	65.88%	198	51.97%	31	8.14%
Financing a child's education	235	43.28%	178	32.78%	130	23.94%	150	39.37%	145	38.06%	86	22.57%
Financing your retirement	291	53.59%	92	16.94%	14	2.58%	205	53.81%	74	19.42%	16	4.20%
Paying off debt	391	72.01%	113	20.81%	39	7.18%	265	69.55%	87	22.83%	29	7.61%
Advancing in your career	298	54.88%	189	34.81%	56	10.31%	192	50.39%	146	38.32%	43	11.29%
Maintaining or addressing your own health	506	93.19%	37	6.81%	3	0.55%	352	92.39%	29	7.61%	4	1.05%
Day to day bills and making ends meet	447	82.32%	86	15.84%	10	1.84%	342	89.76%	53	13.91%	6	1.57%

# The role of a crisis and the value of preparation



## Overall preparation

- Among future caregivers, 69 percent believe their own parent(s) are very or somewhat prepared for caregiving
- Among current caregivers, just 50 percent felt this was true as of when caregiving began
- So adult children tend to under-estimate the extent to which their parents have taken concrete actions and over-estimate overall preparedness
- Interestingly, both current and future caregivers rate their own level of preparation about the same— 61 percent for current caregivers and 64 for future caregivers.
- Combined with the previous result about thinking and planning, the results for paid care expectations, etc, future caregivers expect too much from the available resources and don't spend time planning on managing caregiving

## Discussion and Future Research

- What kinds of actions can a potential caregiver take to mitigate negative impacts?
- For example, earlier conversations, making financial preparations of some kind?
- What kind of policy options exist?
- What drives expectations around potential caregiving?
- Do different households provide different kinds of informal care(time vs money)?