

Support For Siblings

(NAPSA)—More than 65 million people, 29 percent of the U.S. population, provide care for a chronically ill, disabled or aged family member or friend during any given year and spend an average of 20 hours per week providing care for their loved one. We also know many are the primary care provider for an adult brother or sister. Yet far more attention is typically paid to caregivers in the role of spouse, parent or adult child. While the caregiver role can be enjoyable, even inspiring, it can also be a lot of work.

To help, Easter Seals and MassMutual Financial Group conducted a study looking specifically at the needs of adult siblings caring for their brother or sister with a disability. The study found sibling caregivers often don't take advantage of resources and supports that are available to them, including Easter Seals.

Sibling Survey Discoveries

Here are a few of the other findings:

- 30 percent of primary caregivers say they don't get support—emotional, physical and financial help—from friends and family.

- Nearly a third of respondents expect to take on the role of primary caregiver in the future.

- Roughly 80 percent say they have a close relationship with their sibling with a disability and that this relationship enhances their life; just 60 percent of the general public respondents feel the same way about their sibling.

- Approximately 60 percent say having a sibling with a disability has a positive impact on their quality of life—helping them develop patience, understanding, compassion, and providing perspective.

- About one in five say having a sibling with a developmental disability has had a negative impact on the cohesiveness of their family, their relationship with their parents, their interactions with extended family or the quality of



In many families, siblings and other close family members are often caregivers for a loved one with a disability.

their lives. Many cite increased stress and having a limited social life as some of the additional challenges they face in caring for their sibling with a disability.

- Two in five say taking care of their sibling with a disability has caused a lot of financial stress for their family.

- 60 percent wish they knew more about how to plan for their sibling's care and finances.

- Less than a third of respondents are currently involved in a support group, though nearly half say that they would like to know more about them.

“The findings will help us shape our supports for families caring for someone with a disability and raise greater awareness about the challenges caregivers face,” says Patricia Wright, Easter Seals National Director of Autism Services.

Learn More

If you are caring for a sibling with a disability or expect to be someday, you can visit www.MassMutual.com for financial planning resources for caregivers. See more study findings at www.easterseals.com, where you can also find nearby services and supports.