



HEALTHWAYS

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CONTACT:

Bruce Middlebrooks

Healthways Media Relations

(615) 614-4463

bruce.middlebrooks@healthways.com

TWO NEW STUDIES REVEAL WELL-BEING OVER A LIFETIME AND THE WELL-BEING CHALLENGES FACED BY CAREGIVERS

Director of MIT AgeLab and an Author of Both Articles, Joseph Coughlin, Dubs Data a "Wake Up Call" to Boomers, Business Leaders and Policy Makers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – June 8, 2010 – Studies published by Healthways Center for Health Research (CHR) in its May 2010 publication of *Outcomes & Insights* provide new knowledge of the impact of age on well-being, and the effect of caregiving on the well-being of the 52 million Americans providing care for an adult who is ill or disabled. The studies, based on more than 355,000 individual responses collected through 2008, leverage data from the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index™ (WBI), the largest survey of its kind, and the pulse of well-being in America.

The Impact of Caregiving and Employment on Well-Being

The first study, "Estimating the Impact of Caregiving and Employment on Well-Being," demonstrates those who provide care for other adults are in need of well-being support themselves. Employed non-caregivers experience significantly higher well-being than their employed caregiver counterparts.

"One in five American households is already providing support for a loved one (who is not a child) 18 hours or more each week," said Joseph Coughlin, an author of both CHR papers and Director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology AgeLab. "The need for caregivers is not going away. We need to look now at how we can help these people who will be over worked and over stressed."

The ongoing call for caregivers will demand innovations in the workplace, Coughlin said. Jobs that provide flexible hours, unpaid family leave and paid sick or vacation days are more likely to retain caregivers as employees. Additionally, workplace wellness programs can provide a valuable resource to help employees maintain their own well-being while caring for someone else.

The study also shows caregivers worry more than non-caregivers and also experience less happiness. Employed non-caregivers reported feeling happiest (47.1 percent), with employed caregivers falling significantly behind (39.9 percent). The higher stress and lower happiness scores is even more apparent in non-employed caregivers, of which fewer than a third reported happiness the day before.

Overall, these results demonstrate caregivers are more in need of support systems to maintain their well-being. Although the financial and social support offered through employment appear to diminish some of the stress stemming from the caregiving role, employees who act as a caregiver are worse off than their counterparts who do not have to juggle both responsibilities.

The Impact of Age on Well-Being

The second study, "Facets of Well-Being Across the Age Spectrum in the American Population," shows well-being follows a U-shaped curve over the course of adulthood. While young, buoyed by physical health and optimism for the future, people generally have an intermediate (65.9) well-being score. Seniors, age 65 and up, have a significantly higher well-being score (68.8) than any other age group, despite reduced physical health. Those considered middle aged, ages 44 through 64, have the lowest well-being (64.8).

"These data are a wake up call to boomers, business leaders and policymakers," Coughlin said. "While it is great news that today's older adults 'feel better,' we also know that how we manage our well-being in mid life predicts personal health and public costs in late life. All middle-aged Americans should see these findings as a call to engage with their friends, employers, insurers and communities to invest in their well-being now to ensure quality living across the lifespan."

"Both the caregiver and age spectrum well-being studies underscore the importance of addressing the social and emotional factors that influence well-being," said Ben R. Leedle, Jr., CEO of Healthways. "The good news is that programs exist that effectively allow employers to enhance the well-being of their constituents and engage those in the greatest need of assistance."

Complementary research on well-being over a lifetime, also based on WBI data, was published in the May 2010 edition of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. That study, "A Snapshot of the Age Distribution of Psychological Well-Being in the United States," supports the CHR conclusion that well-being follows a U-shaped curve over a lifetime, with highest well-being attained post age 50.

Complete content of "Estimating the Impact of Caregiving and Employment on Well-Being" and "Facets of Well-Being Across the Age Spectrum in the American Population" are available at www.healthways.com. Additional information about the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is available at www.well-beingindex.com.

About Healthways

Healthways is the leading provider of specialized, comprehensive solutions to help millions of people maintain or improve their health and well-being and, as a result, reduce overall costs. Healthways' solutions are designed to keep healthy people healthy, mitigate or eliminate lifestyle risk factors that can lead to disease and optimize care for those with chronic illness. Our proven, evidence-based programs provide highly specific and personalized interventions for each individual in a population, irrespective of age or health status, and are delivered to consumers by phone, mail, internet and face-to-face interactions, both domestically and internationally. Healthways also provides a national,

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fully accredited complementary and alternative Health Provider Network and a national Fitness Center Network, offering convenient access to individuals who seek health services outside of, and in conjunction with, the traditional healthcare system. For more information, please visit www.healthways.com.

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