



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

November 2023

Family Caregivers Month

During the month of November, we pause to recognize and honor the invaluable contributions and personal sacrifices of millions of unpaid family caregivers to help ensure the health, well-being and dignity of a loved one, and their unsung contributions to the economic strength of California. We thank partners, spouses, adult children, siblings, parents, grandparents and other kin, as well as chosen family, for their devotion and care.

Unpaid family caregivers represent the invisible backbone of the care economy for older adults and people with disabilities. Some 38 million Americans – over five million of whom are in California – dedicate roughly 18 hours of care per week, equating to an economic value of \$600 billion annually.

The joys and burdens of this care do not fall evenly; women, particularly Latino, Asian-American, Black, and Native American women, are providing a disproportionately large share of this care – often while simultaneously caring for young children and working for pay. The time needed to care for a loved one can result in financial hardship and a decrease in lifelong Social Security earnings, driving many households into poverty. The emotional and physical stress of caregiving can also lead to negative health impacts on a family caregiver.

I am proud that California's Master Plan for Aging elevated the importance of "Caregiving that Works" as one of five bold goals in our 10-year blueprint for the state. I want to specially acknowledge the important services and support provided by the statewide network of 11 nonprofit Caregiver Resource Centers, 33 Area Agencies on Aging, and 21 Regional Centers that, together with local nonprofits and community-based partners, support California's estimated 5.5 million unpaid family caregivers. These publicly funded centers play a key role in providing California's diverse caregivers with essential tools, including education, training, respite, legal support, insurance counseling and advance care planning.

California continues to advance nation-leading policies to support family caregivers. Our paid family leave covers chosen family, and is also increasing the benefit for low-income workers so that paid leave is affordable. Earlier this year, I was proud to sign legislation that guarantees more paid sick days for California workers to care for themselves and family members. Our Medi-Cal health insurance program now covers respite care as a community service, so caregivers can take needed breaks, and our In-Home Supportive Services program has long provided pay to hundreds of thousands of family caregivers for people with disabilities and older adults.

This November, as many of us gather with our families around the Thanksgiving table, I ask all Californians to join me in recognizing Family Caregivers Month. Let us take time to honor and thank the caregivers in our own families and communities for their tireless work.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom