HIDDEN HEROES COALITION: PROGRESS AND PROMISE

Engaging public, private, nonprofit, labor and faith organizations to deliver a national response to a societal crisis
Dear Friends:

Five years ago, my husband Bob Dole was admitted to Walter Reed Army Medical Center for an extended period of time. During my many visits to be with him, my eyes were opened to the incredible challenges facing the loved ones caring for our wounded warriors. I discovered that across this country, there was a quiet, untold story of profound need being overlooked - the story of the spouses, parents, siblings and other loved ones devoting their lives to caring for those who cared for us.

Five and a half million Americans serve as military and veteran caregivers. Too often, they take on this challenge in isolation, with little or no support. Their journeys are often complicated, consuming and, at times, emotionally overwhelming. Yet, they soldier on with incredible strength and resilience. It is no surprise that experts regard these caregivers as the most significant factor determining the well-being of our wounded, ill and injured warriors.

Upon Bob’s release from Walter Reed, I established the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to help raise awareness and seek solutions to the tremendous challenges facing military and veteran caregivers. In the years since establishing the Foundation and our National Coalition, we have been fortunate to collaborate with countless service-minded leaders. Scholars and behavioral health specialists have helped us measure the severity of the caregiver issue; private corporations have initiated hiring programs and funded caregiver services; nonprofit organizations have offered free training programs and formed peer support networks; Congressional leaders have established a military and veteran caregivers caucus and introduced bipartisan, bicameral caregiver legislation; faith organizations have integrated caregivers into their veteran support programs; and White House leaders have stood with us as we challenged the nation to join in our mission.

Each of these examples of progress is a significant step forward for our military and veteran caregivers. Together, they begin to answer this societal crisis with a holistic national response.

The following report, detailing our progress to date and the promise of what is still to come, has been made possible by working with scores of wonderful partners. My heartfelt thanks for their generous contribution of time and talent; their willingness to collaborate; and their unwavering dedication to our nation’s hidden heroes. Each of us has the ability to ease the load carried by our military caregivers. I invite all organizations and individual Americans to join us in support of America’s hidden heroes.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Dole

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Nearly 100 Dole Caregiver Fellows serve as ambassadors, advocates, and leaders for the Foundation and it’s Coalition partners. Their selfless service has inspired a national movement to support America’s hidden heroes.
INTRODUCTION

More than 5.5 million spouses, parents and other loved ones are caring for the wounded, ill, and injured who have served in the United States military, often doing so without a structured support network and putting their own well-being at risk.

Although much has been written about the role of caregiving for the elderly and chronically ill and for children with special needs, little is known about military caregivers. These caregivers play an essential role in caring for injured, ill, and wounded service members and veterans. Military caregivers improve the quality of life and facilitate faster and improved rehabilitation and recovery for their loved ones. Yet playing this role can impose a substantial physical, emotional, and financial toll on caregivers.

“Across this country a quiet, untold story of profound need is emerging...It’s the story of America’s hidden heroes...women and men caring for those who cared for us. Uncertain about their future, often alone, they soldier on with incredible strength and resilience. Today we say: you are not alone.”
- Senator Elizabeth Dole, 2014

NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

Senator Elizabeth Dole observed firsthand the struggles associated with being a military caregiver. She became intimately aware of the emotional, physical and financial tolls experienced by these caregivers, primarily young spouses and parents. Many were in this role for the first time, managing and balancing multiple injuries, wounds and illnesses. Often putting their own needs last, these caregivers were faced with providing emotional support and stability to their loved ones while handling legal and financial matters and accessing services within complex health care systems with differing structures. Navigating these challenges and many others has become a way of life for over five million men and women across the United States who serve as primary caregivers for wounded service members and veterans representing all eras of war.

For Senator Dole, the lack of support for military and veteran caregivers has become a societal crisis that required a holistic national response. In 2012, she established Caring for Military Families: The Elizabeth Dole Foundation to assist caregivers by raising awareness of the caregiver role, leveraging resources and partnerships to provide support, and identifying best practices and solutions to address the challenges caregivers face. Through innovation, evidence-based research, and collaboration, the Foundation strives to strengthen both national policy and the communities that support military and veteran caregivers.

In the spring of that same year, the Foundation commissioned the RAND Corporation to undertake the first comprehensive, evidence-based national study designed to describe the magnitude of military caregiving in the United States, and to identify gaps in programs, policies, and services designed to support military caregivers.

Two years later, in April 2014, the study was unveiled and disseminated nationwide, followed by the launch of the Foundation’s National Coalition from the White House.

SIGNIFICANT CAREGIVER STATISTICS*

- 5.5 million military caregivers in the United States, representing a quarter of the overall current adult caregiving populations; 1.1 million of these are caring for veterans wounded, ill, or injured since 9/11
- Military caregivers save the U.S. nearly $13.6 billion each year in health care costs
- 47% of post-9/11 caregivers report needing to adjust their work schedules as a result of caregiving; 62% report that caregiving caused them financial strain
- Most programs serving military caregivers tend to serve them incidentally as few programs are designed specifically for military caregivers
- Extended family and nonfamily caregivers make up roughly one-third of caregivers across all post-9/11 and pre-9/11 caregivers
- Nearly 40% of post-9/11 caregivers meet criteria for a depressive diagnosis, a rate twice that observed among pre-9/11 and civilian caregivers, and four times that observed among non-caregivers

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAST YEAR

- Announced a new class of Dole Caregiver Fellows, growing the program from 20 caregivers in 2012 to nearly 100 Fellows, representing all 50 states and Puerto Rico
- Formulated seven Impact Councils from across the Foundation’s National Coalition, based on the seven key areas of need identified by the Foundation’s RAND study; collaborated with Booz Allen Hamilton to convene, host and facilitate nearly 200 experts and thought leaders from each of the seven Council areas
- Hosted a caregiver employment summit in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s Hiring Our Heroes, which also expanded its programs to include caregiver employment webinars and job-fair events
- Enabled American Bar Association, Military Officers Association of America, and Public Counsel to collaborate on Lawyers for Heroes, a service for military and veteran caregivers to obtain free legal representation
- Supported Military Officers Association of America in the development of a caregiver-specific online financial and legal resource guide, with nearly 25,000 unique page views in the first year alone
- Collaborated with Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senators John McCain and Jack Reed, and Representative Jeff Miller on the launch of the Hidden Heroes Congressional Caucus
- Provided counsel in advance of Senator Patty Murray’s introduction of the bi-partisan, bi-cameral caregiver legislation, the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act, with Senator Susan Collins and Representative Jim Langevin
- Assisted in the launch of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors’ Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network, made possible through a unique collaboration of Military and Veteran Service Organizations
- Partnered with Easter Seals and an innovative alliance of organizations to host live webinars and provide 24/7 online resources for caregiver training
- Coordinated with the Home Depot Foundation and Operation Homefront to provide home repair and financial aid to military caregivers and their families
- Collaborated with Jewish Chaplains Council and the Jewish Community Centers Association of North America to launch a new community outreach program for caregivers

PROGRESS:
Our Collective Achievements

Since its launch, the National Coalition comprised of stakeholders from the public, private, labor, nonprofit, and faith communities has identified solutions and committed resources to address the gaps identified in the RAND study. To date, the Foundation has engaged over 100 organizations across all sectors, with many new programs already underway. In July 2014, Senator Dole helped launch a new major bipartisan Congressional Caucus co-chaired by Senators John McCain and Jack Reed, Leader Nancy Pelosi, and Chairman Jeff Miller. The Foundation also worked closely with Senator Patty Murray in the introduction of a bipartisan caregiver bill, co-sponsored by Senator Susan Collins and Representative Jim Langevin. The U.S. Secretary of Veteran Affairs has pledged his support and will be holding regular roundtables with Dole Caregiver Fellows. Additionally a broad national awareness campaign is being developed with the committed leadership of Tom Hanks.

HIDDEN HEROES IMPACT COUNCIL FORUM

On the campus of Booz Allen Hamilton, the Foundation convened the Hidden Heroes Impact Forum to bring together leaders from its National Coalition in a focused discussion on the strategic opportunities immediately available for collaboration in support of military caregivers. Building on the two-year comprehensive, evidence-based national study commissioned by the Foundation and produced by the RAND Corporation, community leaders were organized into seven, focused Impact Councils that were identified in the study as areas of need and gaps in support: Community Support at Home, Education and Training, Employment and Workplace Support, Financial and Legal Issues, Interfaith Action and Ministry, Mental and Physical Health, and Respite Care.

Over the course of two days, forum participants collaborated across sectors, working alongside military caregivers and experts in the field to share multiple perspectives to deepen their understanding of caregiver experiences. They applied this understanding during breakout sessions to develop evidence-based and forward-thinking strategies for addressing the most urgent challenges identified in each of the seven Impact Councils. The Forum set the stage to formalize the many activities and achievements of Coalition members for immediate impact prioritized around the seven key impact areas, and to develop recommendations for solutions that could be collaboratively implemented and sustained moving forward.
Within these sessions, three themes carried across a range of caregiver challenges, illustrating needed resources and approaches common to all seven Impact Councils. These themes are: 1) Caregiver Empowerment; 2) Cultural Competency and Awareness; and 3) Policies, Programs and Services. Priorities and initiatives that incorporate one or more of these themes have the greatest potential to effectively address the most urgent caregiver challenges. Moving forward, these will serve as guideposts for the Impact Councils as they prioritize and formalize their strategies and goals.

**CAREGIVER EMPOWERMENT**

Caregivers experience a long list of challenges and stressors, and therefore it is not surprising that caregiving has been associated with a wide range of physical and psychosocial symptoms (e.g., depression, stress, fatigue, feelings of anger, loneliness, isolation, and a decrease in well-being and life satisfaction). These symptoms place the mental and physical health of the caregiver and their ability to continue to care for their loved one and other family members at risk.

In the context of caregivers, empowerment involves developing the caregiver’s self-confidence and changing their belief in their ability to control resources and make decisions that affect their situation. According to Impact Council participants and validated by the RAND study, efforts needed to empower military caregivers should include those that build their skills and resiliency in caregiving, mitigate potential adverse consequences of caregiving, and build public awareness of the value of caregivers.

This is achieved through:

- High quality, dynamic education and training to help military caregivers understand their short- and long-term roles, teach them the necessary skills to manage both physical and psychological conditions, and foster growth and confidence in their capabilities
- Improved access to programs and services designed specifically for the caregiver
- Structured peer-based social support to address feelings of isolation by increasing connectivity within the population

**CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND AWARENESS**

A frustrating aspect of daily life for military caregivers is interacting with well-intentioned people who do not understand their role as a military caregiver or their unique needs.

Pre-9/11 veterans receiving care generally fit the traditional profile of an elderly person whose needs are related to aging. In contrast, post-9/11 service members represent a very different population, and as a result, their caregivers have very distinct challenges and needs. Although most commonly the caregiver is a young spouse or a parent taking care of a son or daughter, a large number of military caregivers are extended family, friends or neighbors. Nearly 90 percent are 55 and younger, and more than a third are 30 or younger.

Lack of understanding and cultural awareness of this group’s unique needs often result in the caregiver feeling isolated and invisible. Organizations that can help are most often not aware there is a problem, and lack both the resources and the data to effectively provide solutions. Across the seven councils, participants agreed that there is a need for cultural competency resources and education to help improve the general public’s awareness of military caregiver concerns and unique needs.

Following are recommendations:

- Acknowledgment of the special needs and significance of military caregivers that will allow them to play their roles more effectively in both caregiving and in the workplace
- Toolkits and resources that provide information and education about the unique cultural experience of the military caregiver
- Broad public awareness and education campaigns aimed at influencing and expanding the national conversation around military caregiving

**POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

According to the Foundation’s RAND study, programs and services to support military caregivers exist, but many are government and nonprofit programs still in their infancy. Additionally, available resources are largely not evidence based, and are often uncoordinated or scattered.

Caregivers also face challenges with inconsistent eligibility criteria, changing needs over time, and lack of access to the services they need most. There is a great need to coordinate efforts across sectors to address access and eligibility challenges. Therefore, the pursuit of reforms needs to be holistic across the legislative, regulatory, and programmatic landscapes. Across each of the seven Impact Councils, participants agreed that there needs to be a multi-channel approach to reforming current policies and programs, and identifying the largest gaps where new programs, services, and/or legislation may be necessary.

Strategies include:

- Development of a military caregiver policy and legislative platform to prioritize the pursuit of reforms through the Hidden Heroes Congressional Caucus, Coalition member advocacy efforts, and state and local outreach
- Creation of an Interagency Taskforce or Commission across all agencies of the Federal Government with direct oversight of policies and programs that affect military caregivers: Department of Defense (DoD), Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Labor (DoL), and Veterans Affairs (VA). Increasing coordination of services and support across these agencies will bring greater effectiveness
- Creation of a Military Caregiver Center of Excellence to conduct and disseminate research on the short- and long-term needs of caregivers; serve as a clearinghouse for tracking effective programs and ensuring consistent evaluation, as well as projecting and promoting future needs of caregivers to policymakers, government officials, and nonprofit, civic, and business leaders
- Advocacy to ensure caregivers are supported based on the tasks and duties they perform, rather than their relationship to the care recipient

![RAND Study](image1)

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![RAND Study](image1)
The Elizabeth Dole Foundation is moving into the next phase of its mission: creating sustainable impact in the lives of the nation’s military and veteran caregivers. Armed with the RAND study, the Foundation has a clarion call for action and a national Coalition of partners to carry it out. This is a societal crisis that requires a holistic and coordinated national response. Therefore the Foundation’s Impact Councils have formulated a blueprint for organizing strategies and actions in the short- and long-term. In addition, organizations across the Councils are making substantive commitments of their own—resources, programs, advocacy, and more. This well coordinated, collective approach is what will truly make the difference for America’s hidden heroes. The subsequent pages outline the challenges and early actions that have emerged from each of the seven Councils.

IMPACT COUNCILS

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<th>KEY IMPACT AREA</th>
<th>COUNCIL CONTENT FOCUS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Community Support at Home</td>
<td>Organize communities and individual Americans to support military caregivers in their cities, towns and neighborhoods, including building broad awareness of the challenges faced by military and veteran caregivers, and finding ways to match local organizations with the caregivers in their communities</td>
<td>• Rachel O’Herr, Executive Director, Quality of Life Foundation, Inc.</td>
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<td>• Heather Pfitzrand, Senior Manager of National Partnerships and Atlanta Hometown Giving, The Home Depot Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>Identify and develop resources that train caregivers for their roles, including how to perform daily medical procedures, understand common psychological conditions of their care recipients, find and utilize resources, and manage their own stress; and develop caregiver cultural competency training for service providers</td>
<td>• Lynda Davis, Executive Vice President, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)</td>
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<td>• Marjorie Morrison, CEO and Founder, Pylch Armor Institute</td>
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<td>Employment and Workplace Support</td>
<td>Help employers support employed caregivers in their dual roles, understand their strengths and challenges, match caregivers and caregiver-friendly employers, and promote knowledge among caregivers on how to enter or re-enter the workforce</td>
<td>• Eric Eversole, President, Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation</td>
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<td>• Chris Giacchetti, Manager of Military and Disability Recruiting, Capital One</td>
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<td>Help caregivers understand the need for and benefits of long-term financial planning for themselves and their care recipients while identifying products and programs that would help financial and legal professionals support both; includes efforts to improve the caregiver competency of those financial and legal professionals providing services, and to educate them on how caregivers’ needs will change over the long-term</td>
<td>• Kenneth Goldsmith, Senior Legislative Counsel and Director of State Legislation, American Bar Association</td>
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<td>• Justin Schmitt, Assistant Vice President for Corporate Responsibility, USAA</td>
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<td>Interfaith Action and Ministry</td>
<td>Educate faith communities on the needs and experiences of military caregivers that impact their spiritual foundation and reinforce a need for faith participants to provide local resources and referrals for caregivers in their congregations</td>
<td>• Jack Lea, Executive Director, National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces</td>
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<td>Council</td>
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<td>• Dan Lock, Chief Strategy Officer, National Lutheran Communities &amp; Services</td>
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<td>Mental and Physical Health</td>
<td>Address the need to coordinate with government, nonprofit and private sector healthcare organizations to promote and raise awareness of evidence-based healthcare programs that address prevention, care and resilience for caregivers and their families, and urge caregivers to utilize these services</td>
<td>• Catharine Grimes, Director, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation</td>
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<td>• Michelle Kees, Assistant Professor and Faculty Member of Military Support Programs and Networks (M-SRPN), University of Michigan</td>
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<td>Respite Care</td>
<td>Advocate for improvements to the types and accessibility of respite care services, and determine ways to increase awareness and usage of these services among military and veteran caregivers</td>
<td>• Jed Johnson, VP of Strategic Initiatives, Easter Seals</td>
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<td>• Jill Kagan, Program Director, ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center</td>
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One year ago, at the launch of the Foundation’s National Coalition at the White House, First Lady Michelle Obama and Senator Elizabeth Dole joined together in calling the nation to action on behalf of America’s hidden heroes. Over the last year, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation has worked closely with its National Coalition organizations and the Joining Forces team to push for progress and bring hundreds of individuals and organizations together to make a difference in the lives of caregivers.

To build upon the accomplishments of the National Coalition, the Foundation formed seven Impact Councils to continue collaborating on the most pressing challenges facing America’s military and veteran caregivers, as outlined by the RAND study. Short-term programs are quickly being put into place while strategies are being developed to address long-term challenges. The Foundation and members of the National Coalition recognize that many caregivers will serve for decades to come. Therefore, the recommendations developed as part of the Impact Council process must address areas of immediate impact, while also providing sustainable solutions for future generations of caregivers.
**COMMUNITY SUPPORT AT HOME**

**IMPACT COUNCIL FOCUS**
This council is focused on organizing communities and individual Americans to support military and veteran caregivers in their cities, towns and neighborhoods, including building broad awareness of the challenges faced by these caregivers, and finding ways to match local organizations with the caregivers in their communities.

**OVERVIEW**
Caregivers report that they would benefit from local services designed to assist with their everyday caregiving needs as well as the other daily responsibilities that compound their limited time and resources. The RAND study utilizes the phrase “helping hand” to categorize and describe the miscellaneous aid provided directly to caregivers, ranging from transportation to financial and household assistance. While helping hand services are one of the most common forms of assistance, they are largely uncoordinated and caregivers report limited numbers of these programs in their communities. Effective efforts to strengthen community support for caregivers will need to increase awareness, address obstacles to access, and target needs identified by caregivers.

**TOP CHALLENGES FOR CAREGIVERS**
- Government, civic, and philanthropic organizations have difficulty identifying local caregivers and assessing their needs
- Lack of awareness and cultural competency among organizations and the general public
- Educating communities on the need for sustainable support programs
- Lack of continuity in care and support for caregivers and recipients

**INITIAL IMPACT COUNCIL ACTIONS**
- Launch a national awareness campaign chaired by Tom Hanks to grow America’s understanding of the challenges faced by caregivers and how they can contribute to the solutions
- Produce and disseminate a “Caregiver Credo” developed by active caregivers for their peers to use in explaining the needs, strengths, and responsibilities of America’s caregivers to employers, community organizations, or others unfamiliar with military caregiving
- Support the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in direct engagement with caregivers across the country and establish an advisory board to ensure the VA’s leadership hears feedback and ideas directly from caregivers.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**IMPACT COUNCIL FOCUS**
This council seeks to identify and develop resources that train caregivers for their roles, including how to perform daily medical procedures, understand common psychological conditions of their care recipients, find and utilize resources, and manage their own stress. Steps will also be taken to develop the caregiver cultural competency of service providers through training.

**OVERVIEW**
Becoming a military or veteran caregiver is complicated, consuming, and emotionally and physically debilitating with no advance warning, no preparation, and often nowhere to turn for help. As caregivers transition into their new roles, many struggle to find adequate educational resources that will assist and prepare them for the road ahead. Sharing their experiences with other caregivers and learning from subject matter experts can help them feel better prepared in their role and improve their own mental health. The ultimate goal is to offer caregivers high-quality, culturally competent education and training resources that empower them, help them build confidence in their capabilities, and support their success.

**TOP CHALLENGES FOR CAREGIVERS**
- Barriers impede caregivers from participating in education and training programs
- Gaps exist in key areas of programming, while there are redundancies in other areas
- Organizations that provide training and services are not familiar with the challenges and needs of military and veteran caregivers

**INITIAL IMPACT COUNCIL ACTIONS**
- Develop a comprehensive, one-stop online clearinghouse for existing training resources and materials to help military and veteran caregivers better inform and empower themselves
- Collaborate with experts across the Foundation’s Impact Councils to develop original online training modules across the most critical caregiving issues to educate both caregivers and those who provide caregiver services
- Provide counsel and feedback to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in coordinating education resources across the department based on the experiences of caregivers and service providers

**CO-CHAIRS**
- Rachel O’Hern, Executive Director, Quality of Life Foundation, Inc.
- Heather Prill Pritchard, Senior Manager of National Partnerships and Atlanta Hometown Giving, The Home Depot Foundation

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**PROGRESS AND PROMISE**

“We have seen clearly the increased skills, confidence, and peace of mind we can provide caregivers through Operation Family Caregiver’s training, and we have benefited greatly from raised awareness of the issues surrounding military caregiving among the communities around the nation”

Dr. Leisa Eason, Executive Director, Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving

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**CO-CHAIRS**
- Lynda Davis, Executive Vice President, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
- Marjorie Morrison, CEO and Founder, Psych Armor Institute
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE SUPPORT

IMPACT COUNCIL FOCUS
This council aims to help employers support employed caregivers in their dual roles, understand their strengths and challenges, match caregivers and caregiver-friendly employers, and promote knowledge among caregivers on how to enter or re-enter the workforce.

OVERVIEW
Caregivers of military service members and veterans face a number of challenges when it comes to finding and sustaining employment. Absenteeism, reduced hours, early retirement, and job loss as a result of caregiving contribute to reduced wages and the potential loss of health care coverage. The resulting financial strain, particularly for many of the caregivers who are now the sole income provider, takes a toll on the emotional and physical well-being of the caregiver. A significant need exists for work environments that understand the role of the caregiver and the demands they face in their dual roles, and that allow caregivers flexible work schedules to better meet those demands.

TOP CHALLENGES FOR CAREGIVERS
- Lack of cultural awareness and competency in the workplace
- Limited availability of flexible work opportunities and difficulty identifying existing ones
- Lack of employment support resources and policies, such as employee assistance programs

INITIAL IMPACT COUNCIL ACTIONS
- Convene employment advocates, corporations and caregivers to develop a resource guide for caregivers considering how to market their caregiving skills and identify caregiver-friendly employment opportunities as they plan to move within, or re-enter the workforce
- Formulate a comprehensive guide for employers on maintaining caregiver-friendly work environments
- Continue expansion of employment hiring and networking events for military and veteran caregivers
- Distribute best practices for hiring and employing caregivers to human resource professionals and hiring managers nationwide

"One of the chief problems our council is working to solve is finding a way to connect caregivers with the employers who know their value and can offer the flexible work options they need. We want to make sure caregivers don’t have to choose between performing their job and caring for their loved one."

Robin Portman, Executive Vice President, Booz Allen Hamilton

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

IMPACT COUNCIL FOCUS
This council centers on helping caregivers understand the need for and benefits of long-term financial planning for themselves and their care recipients while identifying products and programs that would help financial and legal professionals support both. The council will include efforts to improve the caregiver competency of those financial and legal professionals providing services, and to educate them on how caregivers’ needs will change over the long-term.

OVERVIEW
Caregivers must make an array of financial and legal decisions that range from determining power of attorney to weighing the benefits of taking early retirement to care for a loved one. Each of these decisions can have a long-term impact on the comfort and stability of their family, heightening the importance of having access to adequate information and support. However, research indicates that many military caregivers do not know what services are available to them, and it is unclear if the current services are adequately addressing the needs of caregivers. Understanding the continuity of care, financial implications of long-term care, and the emotional toll associated with these decisions are all issues that have been considered as we strengthen the financial and legal services provided for both the caregiver and care recipient.

TOP CHALLENGES FOR CAREGIVERS
- Limited skills in end of life planning due to a lack of knowledge of available resources
- Lack of consistency in policies, law, and regulations
- Limited access to competent professional support

INITIAL IMPACT COUNCIL ACTIONS
- Continue to expand and actively market available pro-bono legal services for military and veteran caregivers who require the assistance of legal counsel
- Consolidate and update financial and legal best practices and resource guides for military and veteran caregivers
- Expand pre-existing military and veteran programs, policies and services to include caregivers and their families; examples include one-on-one financial counseling, emergency funding/loans, and pro-bono legal services for caregivers after the loss of or divorce from their care recipient

CO-CHAIRS
- Eric Eversole, President, Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
- Chris Giacchi, Manager of Military and Disability Recruiting, Capital One

"Through the services we have launched with the help of our partners, our team has discovered that military and veteran caregivers are eager to take advantage of financial and legal resources that are designed just for them. Caregivers know that the financial and legal choices they make now can have significant implications for decades to come, and we are proud to provide the tools they need to make the right choices early on."

Jim Cuman, Director, Transition Center, Military Officers Association of America

CO-CHAIRS
- Kenneth Goldsmith, Senior Legislative Counsel and Director of State Legislation, American Bar Association
- Justin Schmitt, Assistant Vice President for Corporate Responsibility, USAA
INTERFAITH ACTION AND MINISTRY

IMPACT COUNCIL FOCUS
This council concentrates on educating faith communities on the needs and experiences of military caregivers that impact their spiritual foundation and reinforcing a need for faith participants to provide local resources and referrals for caregivers in their congregations.

OVERVIEW
For many military caregivers, their faith communities are one of the most important sources of support and connection and are often the first outlet to which caregivers turn. Research indicates that as caregivers adjust to their new roles, they may grapple with feelings of confusion, anger, or sadness. Caregivers appreciate knowing that they can reach out to their faith leaders for spiritual counseling and advice to help them cope. They also benefit from involvement in their faith communities in the forms of ministry membership, social engagement, and spiritual support. Addressing the faith-based needs of caregivers is a critical component to supporting their overall well-being.

TOP CHALLENGES FOR CAREGIVERS
- Crisis of faith and uncertainty of beliefs in the midst of caregiving challenges
- Psychological and practical barriers to reaching out to faith communities for support
- Providing faith leaders with more information and resources they can utilize to support military caregivers

INITIAL IMPACT COUNCIL ACTIONS
- Creating and launching a strategic communications initiative to reach leaders of every faith across the entire nation, in communities large and small, building their awareness and understanding of the needs of military caregivers in their communities
- Preparing a guide for faith leaders outlining the many varied ways they and their members can be of support to military caregivers in their communities
- Aggregating existing materials and creating new ones to ensure that faith leaders are knowledgeable about available resources for military caregivers
- Developing strategies for communicating to military caregivers, ensuring they are aware of houses of faith as resources, regardless of their personal beliefs

"We are proud to work with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation’s Interfaith Council to support America’s military and veteran caregivers. The Foundation’s RAND study revealed that the number one need sought by caregivers is spiritual support, and we – along with other faith-based organizations – are ready to provide it."

Joel Osteen, Senior Pastor, Lakewood Church Houston, Texas

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

IMPACT COUNCIL FOCUS
This council addresses the need to coordinate with government, nonprofit and private sector healthcare organizations. The goal is to promote and raise awareness of evidence-based healthcare programs that address prevention, care and resilience for caregivers and their families, and to urge caregivers to utilize these services.

OVERVIEW
The role of a caregiver can be all-consuming and stressful, leaving little time or energy for caregivers to tend to their own needs and well-being. Balancing multiple demands, facing daily stressors, and feeling isolated from others can result in some caregivers developing feelings of anxiety and depression. The demands of being a caregiver can also result in the development or exacerbation of physical health conditions. Lack of time, resources, and health insurance can make it difficult for caregivers to address their health concerns, which in turn compromises their overall health and ability to care for their loved one and other family members. Military and veteran caregivers would benefit from additional access to evidence-based prevention and healthcare programs that address the impact of their responsibilities on their well-being.

TOP CHALLENGES FOR CAREGIVERS
- Limited access to evidence-based mental and physical health programs
- Lack of cultural competency among providers and organizations
- Lack of mental health services for family members, including children
- Experiences of psychological distress and suicidal ideation among caregivers

INITIAL IMPACT COUNCIL ACTIONS
- Promote and increase visibility and access to effective, evidence-based mental and physical health programs and interventions for military caregivers
- Pursue additional research, evaluation, and validation of existing programs and services to identify best practices and gaps in support
- Encourage the expansion of effective pilot programs or new interventions in areas where there is an identified need for increased support
- Promote and encourage military caregiver peer to peer support through new and existing programs
- Work to increase cultural competency among mental and physical healthcare providers

"Too often, America’s military and veteran caregivers are taking on their role alone, in isolation. Our council is focused on ensuring these dedicated caregivers have access to healthcare providers who understand their unique needs, as well as a network of peers who can sympathize with them and support them through tough times."

Mary Winnefeld, Advocate for Military and Veteran Families

CO-CHAIRS
- Jack Lea, Executive Director, National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces
- Dan Look, Chief Strategy Officer, National Lutheran Communities & Services

CO-CHAIRS
- Catharine Grimes, Director, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation
- Michelle Kees, Assistant Professor and Faculty Member of Military Support Programs and Networks (M-SPAN), University of Michigan
RESPITE CARE

IMPACT COUNCIL FOCUS

This council advocates for improvements to the types and accessibility of respite care services, and determining ways to increase awareness and usage of these services among military and veteran caregivers.

OVERVIEW

Taking a break or asking for a helping hand can often be challenging for military caregivers, many of whom do not even identify themselves as caregivers. Many caregivers admit that they no longer have time for themselves and experience a steep decline in quality time with family and friends. Respite services are intended to offer caregivers the support they need to ensure that they themselves can manage the stress of caring for a love one while maintaining a household and often a family. Short-term services from trained individuals may include completing household chores, transportation to doctors’ appointments, or caring for the veteran while the caregiver visits with friends. There is a need for additional quality respite services that engage both the service member and their families.

TOP CHALLENGES FOR CAREGIVERS

- Current respite services are not tailored to the unique needs of military caregivers
- Lack of consistency in eligibility and regulations for respite services across federal, state, and local programs
- Caregivers feel that they do not have time to take advantage of these respite services and therefore need additional outreach to understand the value of respite and methods to access these services

INITIAL IMPACT COUNCIL ACTIONS

- Increase awareness of respite:
  - Target military and veteran caregivers through the creation of easy to understand, consumer-focused documents providing an overview of respite options, potential funding and other resources
  - Target the broad community, encouraging recognition of the importance of respite for military caregivers as essential services
  - Link military families to state Lifespan Respite programs
  - Create educational opportunities for respite providers to better understand military culture and address the unique needs of military caregivers
  - Work to ensure full funding for the Lifespan Respite Care Act
  - Expand the availability of evidence-based and other innovative respite care options

ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGES FOR PROVIDING RESpite CARE TO MILITARY AND VETERAN CAREGIVERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE CARING FOR POST-9/11 VETERANS, IS ENCOURAGING THEM TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EXISTING RESpite SERVICES. OUR COUNCIL NEEDS TO ASSURE AMERICA’S CAREGIVERS THAT IT IS GOOD FOR THEM AND THOSE THEY CARE FOR TO FIND TIME TO TAKE A BREAK. THEY’VE CERTAINLY EARNED IT.

Meg Kabat, Deputy Director, VA Caregiver Support Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

THE HIDDEN HEROES CAMPAIGN

“Our Foundation is enormously grateful to Tom Hanks who has agreed to serve as Chairman of the Hidden Heroes Campaign, a nationwide effort to build awareness and support for our nation’s military and veteran caregivers. When we met, Tom told me that he would be with us every step of the way, and we couldn’t have a better partner.”

- Elizabeth Dole

“The true heroes of America are all too often unseen and undefined. As Senator Dole pointed out to me when we met, there are heroes, millions of them, who are every day caring for our wounded veterans. I join her in this defining national effort to make us all aware of these hidden heroes - to acknowledge the work they do . . . and assistance they are going to need. I thank you all for your support for these heroes hidden among us. If it’s true that we take care of our own, in our nation and communities and in our neighborhoods, it’s the hidden heroes that do so. Let’s join in the work they do.”

- Tom Hanks

CO-CHAIRS

- Jed Johnson, VP of Strategic Initiatives, Easter Seals
- Jill Kagan, Program Director, ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center
About The Elizabeth Dole Foundation

Caring for Military Families: The Elizabeth Dole Foundation uplifts American military and veteran caregivers by strengthening the services afforded to them through innovation, evidence-based research, and collaboration. The Foundation commissioned the first nationwide, comprehensive study on military and veteran caregivers, and launched a national coalition to respond to the gaps in support identified by the report. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the Foundation is represented across all fifty states by Dole Caregiver Fellows, active military and veteran caregivers who serve as advocates, community ambassadors, and advisors to the Foundation and its national coalition. To learn more, visit www.elizabethdolefoundation.org.

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