



Extension Aging and Caregiving

Background

More than **12 percent** of the population in **Texas is older than 65**, and that number is expected to surpass **20 percent by 2050**. Decreasing birth rates in the state and increasing life expectancy are contributing to a rise in the median age of the population. While Texas remains a relatively “young” state, the older population is growing faster than the population of the state as a whole, with the fastest growing age group being the oldest old.

Formal and informal caregiving are and will continue to be important for older Texans to remain active, vibrant parts of their communities — especially in the state’s rural areas.

Relevance

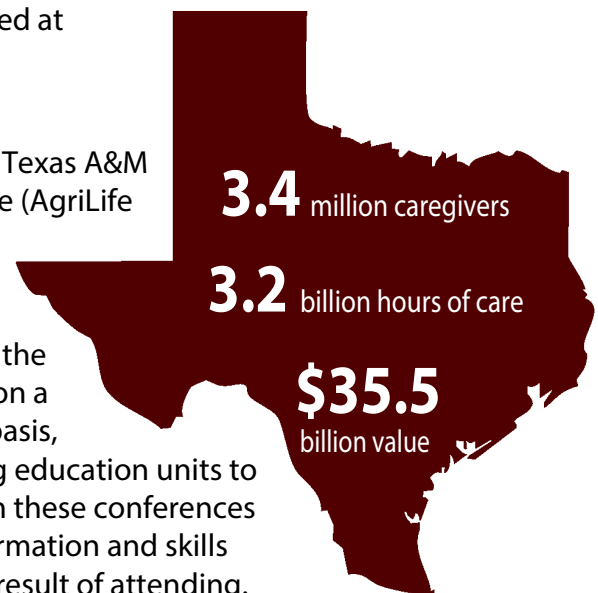
Families provide an estimated 80 percent of care to older adults, with the remaining 20 percent provided by formal community agencies and institutional facilities. Estimates show that Texas has approximately 3.4 million caregivers, who provide more than 3.2 billion hours of care valued at over \$35.5 billion.

Response

Eldercare Conferences. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension) continues to sponsor and/or actively participate in eldercare conferences throughout the state. Conferences exist on a county or multi-county basis, often offering continuing education units to attendees. Participants in these conferences report learning new information and skills related to eldercare as a result of attending.

Relative Caregiving. AgriLife Extension, in partnership with multiple agencies throughout Texas, provides education and support to grandparents rearing their grandchildren and other relative caregivers. In counties across the state, AgriLife Extension sponsors or helps to coordinate workshops on a variety of topics, including parenting skills, legal issues, social support and support groups.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers. AgriLife Extension provides this evidence-based educational intervention to caregivers of persons with chronic health conditions, persons with special needs and service members or veterans. (Continues on page 2.)



Response (continued)

Over the six-lesson series, caregivers learn better self-care behaviors, better emotional management and how to access community resources, all while building more self-confidence.

Military Families Learning Network – Military Caregiving. AgriLife Extension is a partner with the other land-grant colleges and universities and their Extension agencies supporting the Military Families Learning Network. A unique collaboration between the United States Departments of Agriculture and Defense, AgriLife Extension is supporting helping professionals who work with service members, their caregivers and veterans. More information at: militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org.

Improving Health Literacy. AgriLife Extension helps Texans “obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions” through its health literacy series. The series helps older adults and their caregivers understand the importance of taking an active role in their own health through effective communication with health providers, managing medicines, accessing benefits and managing chronic conditions.

Fall Risk Reduction. AgriLife Extension offers additional fall risk reduction education, in addition to implementing *A Matter of Balance*, including an educational video — *Fall Prevention in the Home: Changes for Healthy Living*. Scenes in the video feature community-dwelling older adults in six high-risk situations and highlight effective ways to make slight modifications to the home environment to reduce the risk of falling. The video is available as a DVD in English and Spanish from: agrilifebookstore.org (item # FCS-001).

2019 *at a glance*

In **2019**, AgriLife Extension caregiving programs reached more than **4,589 educational contacts**, providing more than **5,000 contact hours**. AgriLife Extension provided primary leadership and/or speaker support for four caregiving conferences across the state, targeting professional and non-professional caregivers. AgriLife Extension also conducted online professional development webinars related to caregiving, allowing for synchronous and asynchronous learning: **84 percent** of the total contacts and half of the total hours were online only.

