

# Caregiver Support Policy





## Caregiver Support Policy

Policies and resources to support those caring for a loved one with cancer can show that your company cares about your employees, that you respect their role as a caregiver, and that you will do what you can to help. Flexible scheduling, the latest cancer information, and other resources can help employees get back on their feet more quickly and can help caregivers reduce and manage stress while giving attention to self-care responsibilities. Helpful policies and resources can help employees return to work as soon as possible.

This document provides information to help employers develop a caregiver support policy and identify associated resources. We recommend that the following four areas be addressed in a policy for employees who serve as caregivers: 1) the definition of caregiver, 2) workplace leave and alternative work arrangement policies to support caregivers, 3) benefits to support caregivers, and 4) a list of American Cancer Society resources for caregivers.

The American Cancer Society defines a caregiver as the person who most often provides physical and emotional care to someone with cancer and who is not paid to do so. They may be a family member, a close friend, a coworker, or a neighbor. Since many aspects of cancer care happen on an outpatient basis, sicker people are being cared for at home. Caregivers may take on a variety of different roles and responsibilities. Reliable, ongoing caregiver support is very important to the physical and emotional well-being of someone with a cancer diagnosis. Caring for someone with cancer can take a physical and emotional toll on the caregiver as well, so self-care and support for the caregiver are equally important.

### How to Customize the Caregiver Support Policy Template

If you already have an existing policy or policies, but you want to make sure they are up to date with the American Cancer Society recommendations or are more accessible to caregivers, use the following template as a guide. Employers can also use this document to help their employees navigate the process of caregiving. Otherwise, use the following template to create a new caregiver support policy for your worksite.

All items in [brackets] should be customized to fit your worksite's policy preferences.

***The information provided in this document, including the template policy provided, is intended to provide examples of policies, resources, and best practices to support the needs of your employees who may be serving as caregivers. It is not a substitute for legal advice and may not address all your employees' legal rights or your responsibilities as an employer under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or other applicable law. For information on legal rights and responsibilities, please consult with your legal counsel.***



# Caregiver Support Policy Template

## PURPOSE

[Worksite Name] is committed to providing support for caregivers of persons with cancer. This caregiver support policy applies to all employees, [interns, and volunteers] of [Worksite Name] regardless of age, cultural or religious practices, gender identity, sexual orientation, or status regarding disabilities.

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT POLICY

[Worksite Name] is enacting a caregiver support policy as follows:

- 1. Caregiver defined.** [Worksite Name] defines a caregiver as the person who most often provides physical and emotional support to someone who has been diagnosed with cancer (or other illnesses or scenarios) and is not paid to do so. Caregivers may provide support for a sick [child, spouse, domestic partner, parent, stepparent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, parent-in-law, coworker, neighbor, or friend].
- 2. Human resources policies to support caregivers.** [Worksite Name] has the following policies to provide support: [paid time off, family and medical leave, flexible scheduling/alternative work arrangements, sick leave policy, personal leave of absence policy, bereavement policy].
- 3. Benefits to support caregivers.** Please contact Human Resources to discuss your policy benefits. [Worksite Name] has the following benefits for caregivers: [health insurance, disability insurance, employee assistance program (EAP)].
- 4. Information and resources to support caregivers**
  - Caregivers can call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 for free information about cancer types, treatment, and side effects; health insurance assistance; transportation and lodging requests; and referrals to caregiver support programs and local respite services.

***Disclaimer:** Information provided by the American Cancer Society is not intended as medical advice and should not be relied upon as a substitute for the expertise and judgment of your health care provider and cancer care team. People with cancer and their caregivers should consult with a qualified health care provider regarding their individual medical needs.*
  - Additional information and resources for caregivers, such as tips on caring for people with cancer, self-care strategies, and online support communities, forums, and tools, may be accessed through the American Cancer Society website at [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org):
  - [ACS Caregiver Resource Guide](#) (comprehensive, online, and downloadable PDF)
  - [ACS Caregiver Support Information](#)
  - [ACS Caregiver Support Video Series](#)
  - [ACS Cancer Survivors Network](#)® (an online community forum connecting people whose lives have been affected by cancer)



## CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICES

Support services are available to employees [and in some cases, dependents] serving as caregivers as defined under this caregiver support policy. Eligibility for certain services and resources might depend on health insurance coverage.

[Worksite Name] provides the following additional caregiver resources and support services:

- [Support groups for caregivers either through an on-site, employee-led group, or off-site community group]
- [Stress reduction opportunities such as on-site yoga classes, a quiet room, or massage discounts]
- [Health advocacy or patient navigation services either through health insurance or subsidized through an outside company that provides these services]
- [Legal and financial counseling]
- [Caregiver relief support (e.g., respite care) subsidized through a home care company]

## COMMUNICATION AND QUESTIONS

Employees will be informed of this caregiver support policy through [newsletters, inserts in the employee manual, email, new hire orientation, and training provided by their supervisors].

Employees with questions regarding this policy should contact [insert Worksite contact.]