



# HOW TO HELP Hispanic Caregivers

*Caregivers develop chronic health problems at nearly twice the rate of non-caregivers. As many as 70 percent of family caregivers experience depression and anxiety. <sup>1</sup> Educating the community about caregiver stress and why it is important to take a break is fundamental.*

## Understanding the Hispanic Population and Culture

The Hispanic perception of a caregiver is based on many factors, including language, cultural values, economic circumstances and family dynamics. Hispanic caregivers may experience giving care to a relative or child differently than do people of other ethnicities. Many Hispanics do not consider caregiving to be a burden, but an honor. In fact, the term “caregiver burden” may denote a negative tone and be offensive to some.<sup>2</sup>

Hispanic families tend to have extended family networks that understand caregiving as a familial obligation. Adults in Hispanic families generally expect, and do not question the need, to provide ongoing care to an aging parent, grandparent or family member with a disability. Their primary goal is to keep the family close, living at home with other family, rather than sending a loved one to a nursing facility or other institution.<sup>3,4</sup>

Another barrier to supporting caregivers is the fact that there is no good translation for the word “burden” in Spanish. Perhaps the closest Spanish word is *carga* which translates to a physical load, but not an emotional one. *Carga* also implies that caregiving is a burden, rather than an honorable duty.<sup>5</sup>

Because of these factors, Hispanic caregivers are often unwilling to accept help in caring for their loved ones.<sup>6</sup> This includes help in the form of respite. Research shows that Hispanic families may be more responsive



to the suggestion of taking a break, or respite, if it comes from a health care professional or trusted source. According to the National Alliance for Caregiving, 81 percent of Hispanic caregivers who sought information for a caregiving challenge report turning to doctors, nurses, health workers, pharmacists or other health professionals for help.<sup>7</sup>

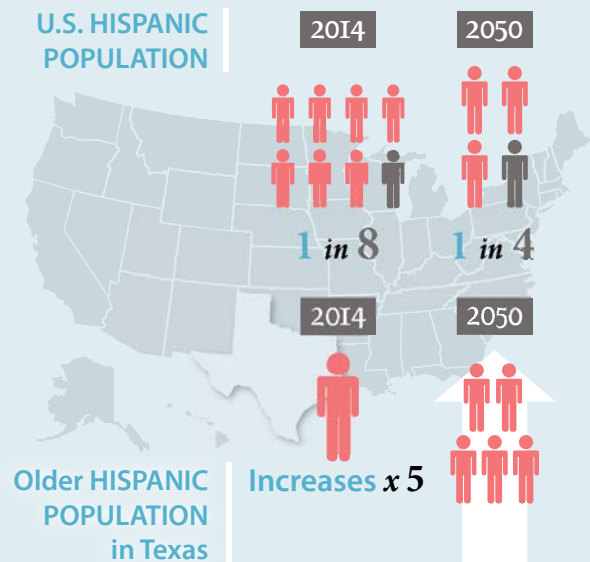
Additionally, Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias often go undiagnosed in the Hispanic community. Creating opportunities for Hispanics to overcome deep cultural barriers to obtaining care is important to supporting these caregivers. Hispanic’s strong cultural commitment to family can result in increased caregiver stress.<sup>8</sup>

## Demographics

Hispanics are the fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States: one in eight residents is Hispanic and by 2050, one in four Americans will be Hispanic.<sup>9</sup>


Today, more than 38 percent of the Texas population is Hispanic.<sup>10</sup>


The older adult population in Texas reflects the growth of Hispanics in the general population. Between 2014 and 2050, the older Hispanic population in Texas is expected to increase fivefold. By 2050, Anglos will no longer represent the majority of the older adult population in Texas.<sup>11</sup>





## Outreach/Developing Informational Materials

Reaching out to Hispanic caregivers should include culturally competent informational materials with a message that will resonate with the target audience. It is not sufficient to merely translate current materials into Spanish.

 **Highlight the importance of the family role in caring for a loved one.** For many, the role of caregiver is viewed as an honor. This plays on the sense of pride many Hispanics feels in caring for loved ones.

 **Do not use the word “burden” or similar phrases.** The Spanish language does not have an equivalent word. To some, characterizing caregiving as a burden could be considered complaining and may be unacceptable to the family culture.

 **Reach out to families through trusted community sources such as community centers, faith-based organizations, community health workers or *promotoras*.** Doing so provides *personalismo* – personal touch – and can reduce cultural, linguistic and other barriers in many Hispanic communities.

 **Partner with trusted community organizations to build a positive presence in the community.** This tactic may also mean a higher comfort level and can translate into community buy-in, increasing participation and creating an opportunity to further develop relationships with those served.

 **Develop culturally competent educational materials.**

<sup>1</sup>Family Caregiver Alliance, <https://caregiver.org/selected-caregiver-statistics>. <sup>2</sup>Lyda Consuelo Arévalo-Flechas, RN, MSN, Factors Influencing Latino/Hispanic Caregivers' Perception Of The Experience Of Caring For A Relative With Alzheimer's Disease (2008), Research Gate, ProQuest LLC, Web. 19 Nov. 2014, <http://tinyurl.com/kgvoxxw>. <sup>3</sup>Evercare and National Alliance for Caregiving. Evercare Study of Hispanic Family Caregiving in the U.S. (2008), Web, 1 Nov. 2014, <http://tinyurl.com/n6blr3v>. <sup>4</sup>Karen Stabiner, Strains for Hispanic Caregivers. The New York Times. <sup>5,6</sup>Consuelo Arévalo-Flechas, Lyda, RN, MSN. <sup>7</sup>Evercare and National Alliance for Caregiving. Hispanic Family Caregiving in the U.S., <http://tinyurl.com/n6blr3v>. <sup>8</sup>Serving Hispanic Families, Project funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging developed by the Alzheimer's Association, Serving Hispanic Families Toolkit <http://tinyurl.com/pd4hnzq>. <sup>9</sup>Serving Hispanic Families, Project funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging developed by the Alzheimer's Association, Serving Hispanic Families Toolkit <http://tinyurl.com/pd4hnzq>. <sup>10</sup>Texas Quick Facts <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48000.html>. <sup>11</sup>Texas State Plan on Aging 2015-2017, <http://tinyurl.com/ojah65d>.