

**Rocky Mountain Conference on Aging
Aging in the Workplace**

Working It Out: The Family Caregiver's Dilemma

Presenter Name: Emily Cooper and Anne Togher

Presentation Date and Time: October 25, 2007 at 10:30 a.m.

This workshop focused on the fact that there are 34 million family caregivers in the U.S. and 60% of them are employed. The workshop focused on the challenges of caregivers in the workplace focusing on job duties and caregiving responsibilities. The workshop addressed the physical and emotional impact of caregiving as well as the financial impact on families when caregivers have to reduce hours, and leave jobs. The impact on retirement benefits for the caregivers was also mentioned.

Key highlights:

1. Education of the caregiver, the family, the employer and the community was stressed. Families need to be aware of the resources available in the community so that they will be more aware of options they have and support services which are available.
2. Encourage the expansion of options available through the employer to allow the employee to remain on the job and enable the employee to provide the care necessary for the family member for as long as possible. This could include the development of a cafeteria style benefits plan which enables the care provider to work reduced hours and maintain benefits, telecommute or place the family member in a day program at a reduced rate.
3. Support the development of services specifically for caregivers such as pre paid legal and financial planning services, a caregiver hot line and emergency respite services for caregivers.
4. Provide for in-house social services from a professional to analyze caregiving situations and provide case management if necessary.

Submitted by: Katharine Humphreys, University of Northern Colorado, October 28, 2007