

RETENTION

ELDER CARE BENEFITS



While much of the HR world has been fixated on baby boomer retirement plans, there's another issue facing this generation of workers that employers should be considering: elder care.

Many baby boomers now

face the prospect of caring for both children and aging parents or loved ones. According to Statistics Canada, in 2002, there were more than two million people 45 years and over who reported providing informal care to seniors. Almost 20 per cent of both women and men aged 45 and over reported giving care to one or more seniors with a long-term health problem and, among currently employed caregivers, as many as one in five women and one in 10 men could retire sooner than planned because of caregiving responsibilities.

One option to keep these people working longer—as well as attracting new talent—is to add elder care to employer benefits programs.

Elder care benefits usually include a geriatric care manager—a professional with expertise in the public and private programs and services available to individuals in need of support. These managers provide access to services and resources to assist people caring for an elderly parent or loved one.

Some companies offer these benefits through their Employee Assistance Plan while others may offer referral services from their human resources department. Some are data-based referrals only and others offer customized services that include face-to-face meetings.—Audrey Miller **HR**

Audrey Miller is the founder and managing director of Elder Caring Inc.



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416.915.9500 ext. 3777 | 800.353.2049 ext. 3777
infopreemployment@on.garda.ca