

Unintended consequences: caregivers may be a barrier to the aging becoming tech savvy

A study by the Global Social Enterprise Initiative (GSEI) at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business and Philips reveals that family caregivers realize technology can enrich the lives of older adults in their care. Yet, caregivers are also unintentional barriers to the actual technology's adoption.

Caregivers want to help improve the lives of older adults in their care



cite enrichment for their care recipient at, or near, the top of their priority list

acknowledge the older adult in their care will become more reliant on them for entertainment and enrichment as they age report that their care recipient has not started a new enrichment activity in the past two years

Caregivers are willing to teach and older adults want to learn



63% believe care recipients are open to learning new technology



Older adults are using technology, and are open to using more

The caregivers surveyed reported that the older adults in their care are using smartphones to:





Yet caregivers' primary responsibilities can get in the way of teaching new technology

63%

believe they have the time to invest in teaching their care recipient a new technology

11 work days

However, most family caregivers say they spend an average of 11 working days per month on caregiving activities





have children in their household



If caregivers had extra time in their day, they would spend only 17% of that time with their care recipient

Technology has the potential to offer great benefits to older adults receiving care

"We need to **eliminate the disconnect** between the caregivers' ability to incorporate enriching technology into their care routines and their role in providing basic care for their loved ones."

> - Bill Novelli, GSEI founder and Georgetown McDonough professor.

> > "We now know that **technology solutions need to be mutually beneficial**, giving the caregiver time back in their day, as well as addressing the social and emotional needs of the care recipient, in order to have a

- Kimberly O'Loughlin, General Manager of Philips

Home Monitoring.



GLOBAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY McDonough School of Business

The study "Family Matters in Caregiving and Tech Adoption," conducted in partnership with Epitome Group, engaged in 20 paired qualitative interviews with caregivers and care recipients to assess technology use for caregiving among the general population. The data from those discussions, as well as secondary research on technology use among seniors, was then used to develop a quantitative survey which was given to a sample of 255 Americans and Canadians, aged 30–65, who were most likely to use technology for caregiving and have care recipients who were also technology users.