



**State of Illinois**  
Illinois Department of Public Health

# Caregiving Burden Brief

January 2024

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# Caregiving

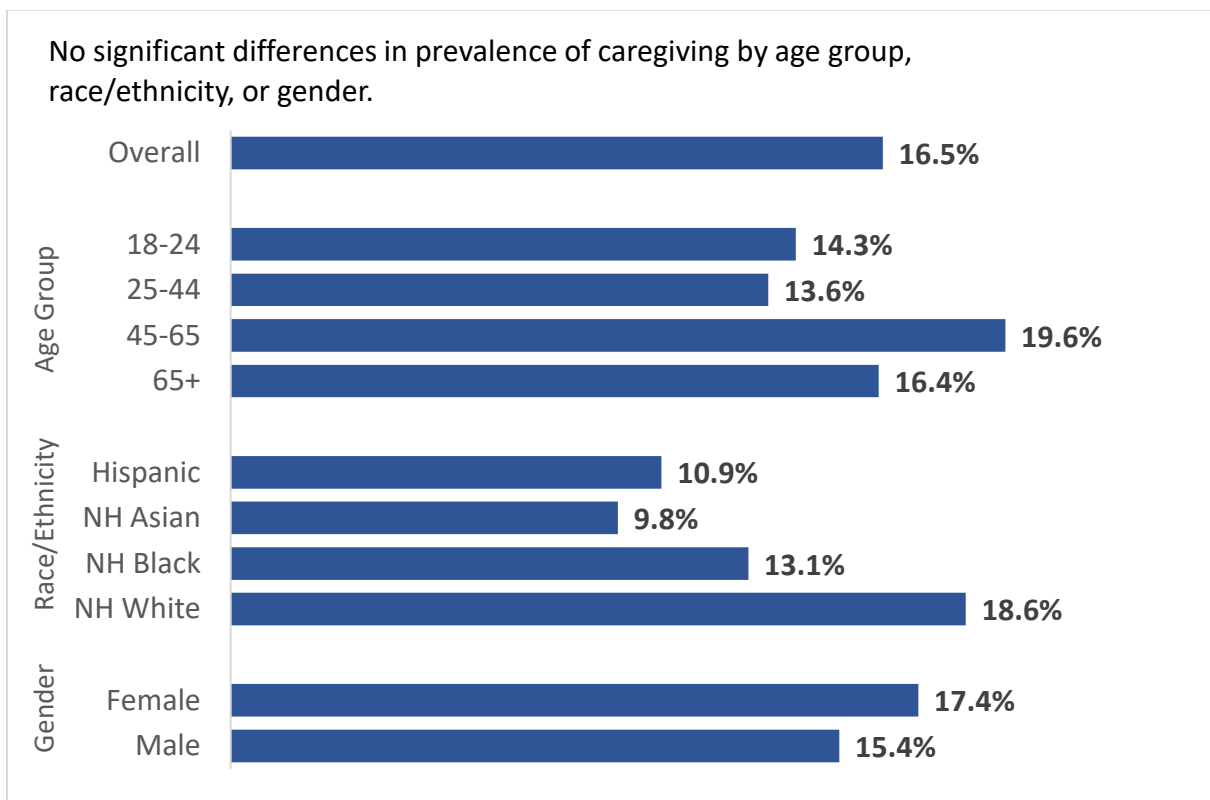
*A report based on the Illinois Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2021*

A caregiver is someone who provides regular care or assistance to a friend or family member with a health problem or disability. Just over 1.2 million Illinois adults are caregivers. Additionally, 11.9% of adults expect to have a relative that they will need to provide care for in the future.

## Caregiver Characteristics

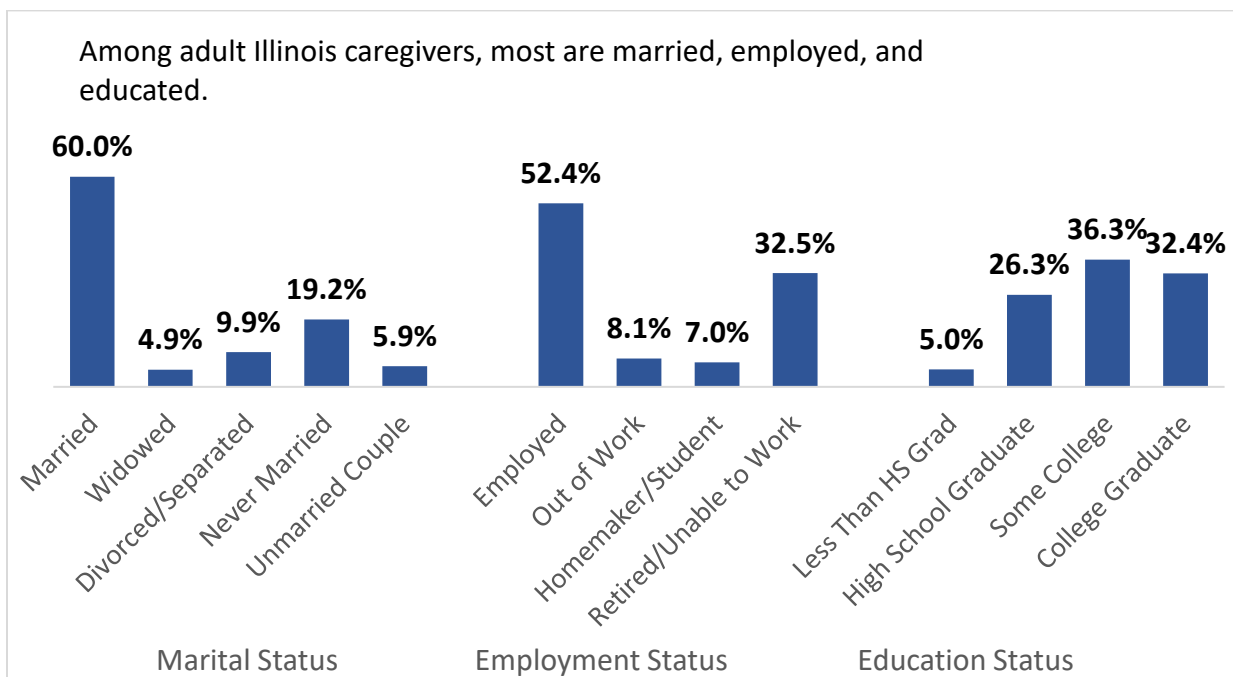
About 1 in 6 adults (16.5%) of adults across all age groups, race/ethnic groups, and gender report being a caregiver.

Figure 1. Prevalence of caregiving by key demographics, Illinois, 2021



Among adults who report being a caregiver, 60% are married while 19.2% have never married and around 10% are divorced/separated. Half of adult caregivers are employed (52.4%) and another 32.5% are retired/unable to work. Caregivers are educated, 68.7% have had some college or are college graduates. Half of caregivers (51.6%) have two or more chronic conditions themselves and 12.9% report their physical health being not good for half the days in the past month, while 20.7% report their mental health not being good for half the days in the past month.

Figure 2. Distribution of key demographics among adult caregivers, Illinois, 2021



## Caregiver Commitments

The majority (67.1%) of caregivers are providing care to a family relative that is not a spouse/partner followed by 18.9% of care recipients being a spouse/partner and 14.1% being a non-relative. The majority (68.2%) of caregivers provide less than 20 hours a week of care while 20% are providing care full time (40+ hours/week). Around 7% of the care recipients have dementia/other cognitive impairment disorders. About half (45.8%) of caregivers provide assistance with both personal care and household tasks while only 4.8% are providing personal care assistance.

# Discussion

## Summary of Findings

About 1 in 6 (16.5%) of adults in Illinois report being a caregiver to a friend or family member with a health problem or disability. Among caregivers, half (51.6%) live with two or more chronic conditions themselves. Caregivers also report 12.9% poor physical health, meaning their physical health is not good for 14 or more days in the past month, and 20.7% report frequent mental distress 14 or more days in the past month. Approximately 7% of those receiving care have dementia or other cognitive impairment disorders.

## Implications and Action

A caregiver is someone who provides regular care or assistance to a friend or family member with a health problem or disability. Many caregivers do not identify themselves as such and cultural factors can further influence caregivers' perception and experience of their role as well. Findings in this report also highlight the reality that half of Illinois caregivers have chronic health conditions themselves, and 20% report mental health not being good. Illinois caregivers are important and need support. Communities, health systems, public health, social services, and other sectors can help by identifying caregivers, acknowledging the importance of their vital role, and supporting caregivers in managing their own health and well-being. For more information about how to access caregiver support in Illinois, contact a [Caregiver Resource Center](#) near you.