Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

The Surgeon General is Right, We Need a Caregiving Agenda in 200 Words

Family & Community Health

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As we at PolicyLab have previously articulated, a holistic U.S. policy agenda that supports the needs of parents and caregivers is long overdue. Such a "caregiving agenda" would recognize the critical role that family caregivers play in our society, and how supporting their health also improves the health of those they care for.

We welcome the U.S. Surgeon General's recent advisory on the mental health and well-being of parents, and his related commentary calling out that parents are "at their wits' end." We are also encouraged that there is discussion surrounding how to make raising a family in the U.S. more affordable within the U.S. presidential campaign.

The Surgeon General cites 2023 data showing that 48% of parents say most days their stress is completely overwhelming, compared to 26% among other adults. Evidence tells us that in addition to policy changes that would expand access to quality and affordable child care, paid family and medical leave, and direct economic supports, we must also uplift the mental health of parents. Leveraging pediatric primary care to support parents is one important strategy, including through better integrating home visiting services and models such as HealthySteps and PriCARE. These family-centered interventions support healthy child development *and* caregiver well-being.

We are excited about the growing national conversation about the important role of family caregivers and the stresses that they face. They deserve public policy and programs that support them.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Communications Manager ***Laura Cavello****.*

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