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AARP Maine Caregiving in the Workplace Survey

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Released February 2005



AARP Maine Caregiving in the Workplace Survey

Report Prepared by Erica Dinger

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our website, www.aarp.org. AARP Foundation is our affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Acknowledgements

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Background

As parents and loved ones age, many employees find themselves in the role of caregiver to their aging family members. This caregiving role may interfere with their role as employee- through absenteeism, early departure from work, late arrival to work, personal phone calls, and emotional distraction. The costs associated with this loss of productivity and with employee attrition are high; overall costs of caregiving to U.S companies has been estimated at 11.4 billion dollars annually—or \$1,142 per employee per year¹.

In order to assess what resources are available in Maine to employees who are caring for an older relative, AARP Maine commissioned this study of companies in the State who have at least two employees. Of 2,242 businesses that were contacted through a mail survey directed to their human resources department, 436 (19%) responded. This survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 4.2 percent.

Highlights

- Almost half (46%) of respondents said that one or more of their employees provided care or assistance to an older person.
- A third (33%) say that an employee has asked for time off for caregiving, while seven percent say an employee has requested time off under the Family Medical Leave Act.
- Funeral or bereavement leave (41%), flexible work schedules (36%), and job security (33%) are the most common services or programs offered to caregivers. However, 39 percent say they offer no programs or services for caregivers.
- Of those offering caregiving services, covering the employee's time (47%) is the biggest barrier to implementing caregiving programs or services.
- Almost six in ten (58%) of those offering caregiving benefits say that caregiving has a major or minor effect on employee performance.
- More than half (56%) would be interested in learning more about resources available for caregiving employees.

¹ *The Metlife Study of Employer Costs for Working Caregivers*, 1997. Metlife Mature Market Group, Westport, CT.

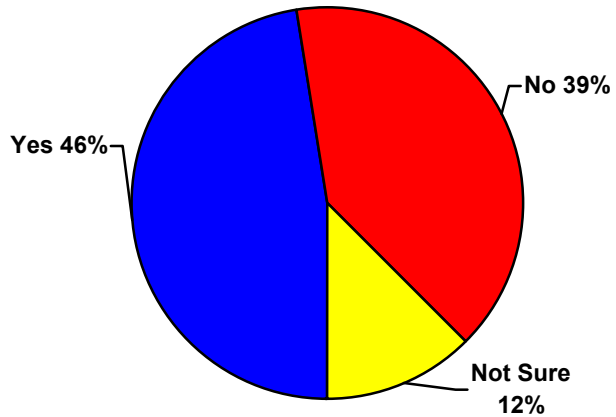
Findings

Employers believe their employees have provided caregiving services in the last two years.

Almost half of employers say that they have an employee who has provided care or assistance to an older person during the last two years.

Those respondents who said they had an employee who was a caregiver (N=200) were then asked to estimate what percentage of their employees were caregivers: 37 percent said 0-5 percent were caregivers, 15 percent said 6-10 percent, 14 percent said 20-49 percent, and 19 percent said 50 percent or more were caregivers. Nine percent were unsure of how many of their employees were caregivers.

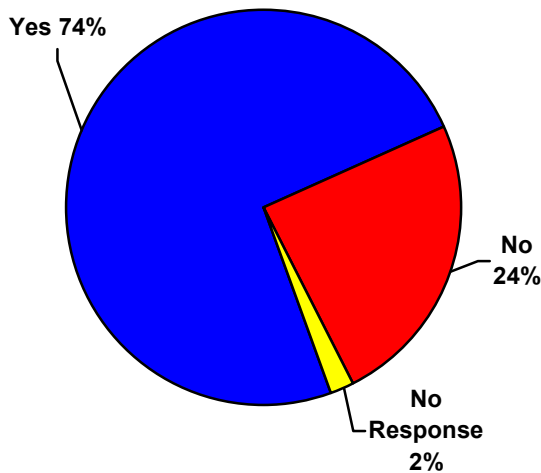
Whether Employees are Caregivers
(N=436)



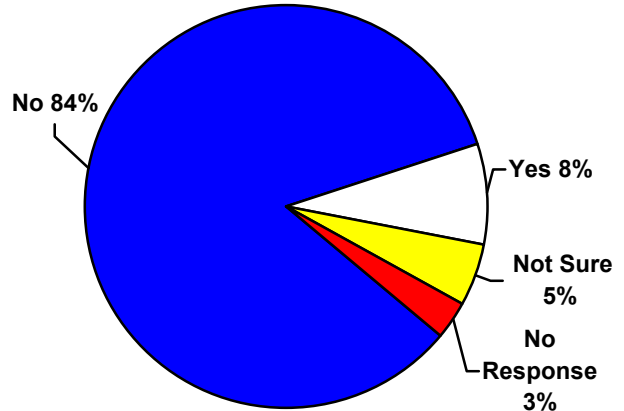
Three-fourths of responding companies offer benefits but the majority do not offer an employee assistance program.

Three-fourths of Maine companies say they offer benefits to their employees, such as health insurance or paid time off. However, only eight percent provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). An EAP typically provides confidential short-term counseling to employees having difficulties in their personal and/or work life, as well as offering referral services.

Whether Employers Offer Employee Benefits
(N=436)



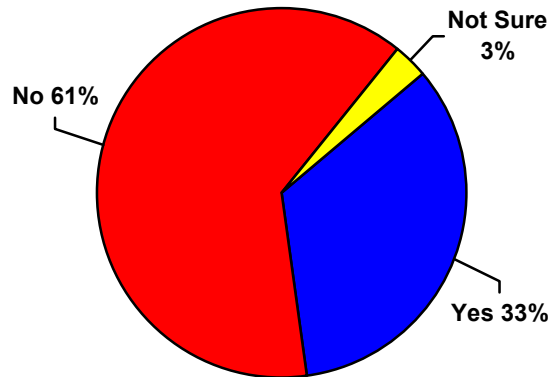
Whether Companies Have an EPA
(N=436)



Employers believe their employees would be comfortable asking for time off for caregiving, and a third report that employees have done so.

More than three-quarters of employers believe that their employees would be comfortable asking for time off for caregiving activities. A third (33%) report that employees have asked for time off to assist an older person. However, only seven percent have requested time off under the Family Medical Leave Act.

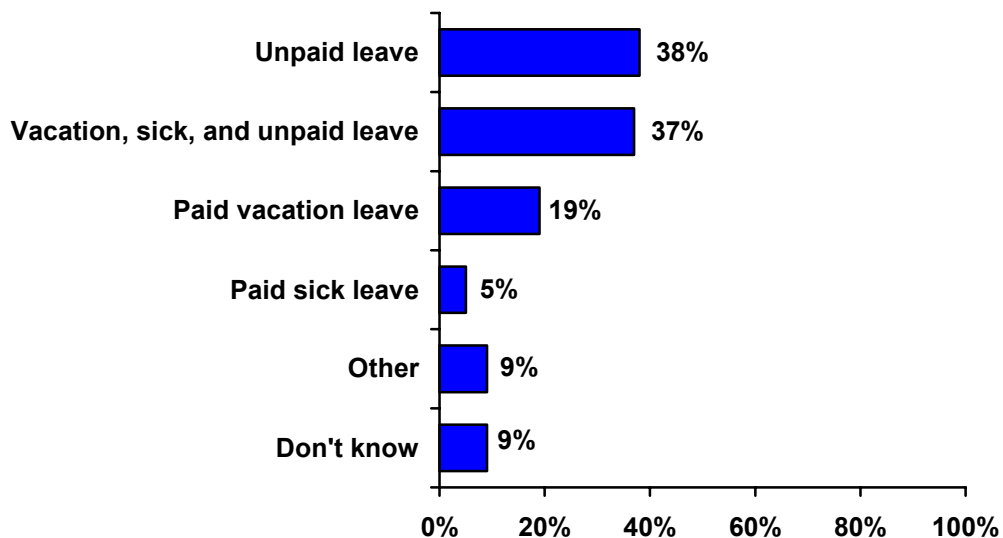
Whether Employees Have Asked for Time Off for Caregiving (N=436)



Maine employees typically would use unpaid leave if they need time off for caregiving activities.

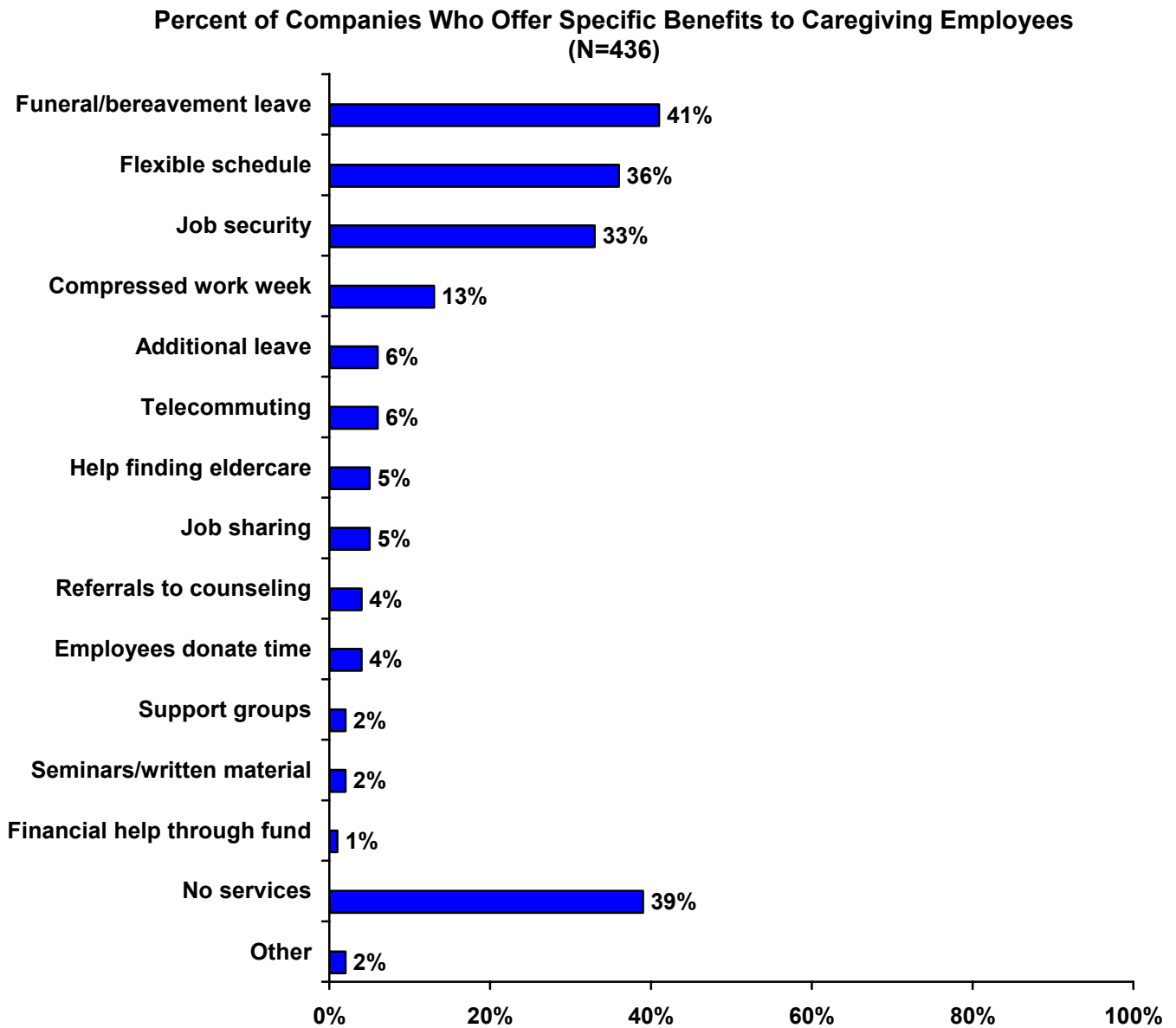
Almost four in ten said that if an employee took time off to take care of an older parent or relative they would use unpaid leave. A similar number said that employees would use a combination of vacation, sick, and unpaid leave to provide caregiving.

Type of Leave Employees Would Use if They Took Time Off to Care for an Older Relative (N=436)



Four in ten companies offer funeral leave for caregiving employees, while a similar number offer no programs or services for caregivers.

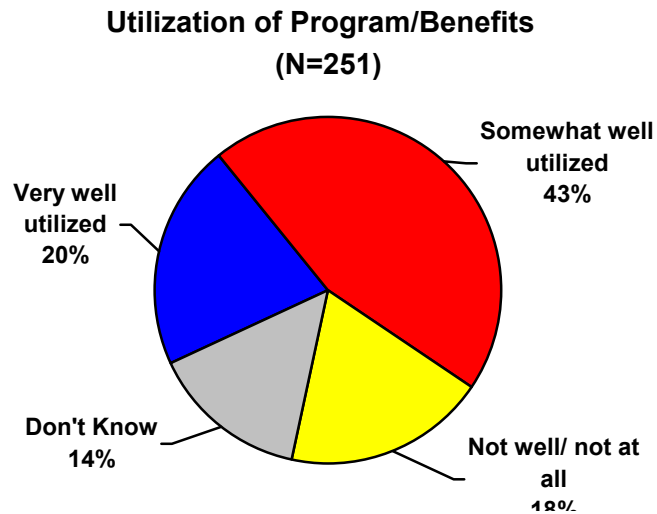
Funeral/bereavement leave, flexible work schedules, and job security are the most commonly offered benefits for caregiving employees among companies in Maine. Some companies also offer more creative benefits, such as support groups and allowing other employees to donate time to the caregiving employee. However, fully 39 percent offer no services to caregiving employees.



Most caregiving programs have been in place for five or more years and are well utilized.

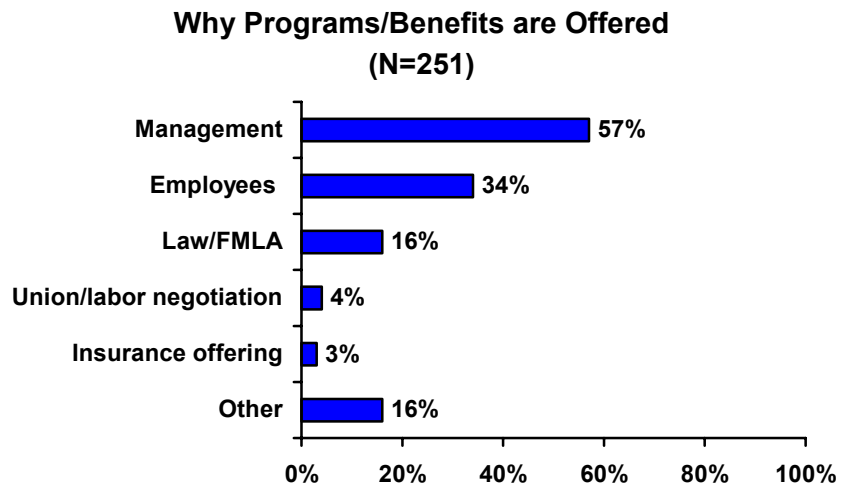
Six in ten (63%) companies that have a program or benefit for caregivers (n=251) say that the program or benefit has been in place for five years or more. Sixteen percent say the program has been in place for two to five years.

In addition, more than six in ten (63%) say the program or benefit is *very* or *somewhat well* utilized.



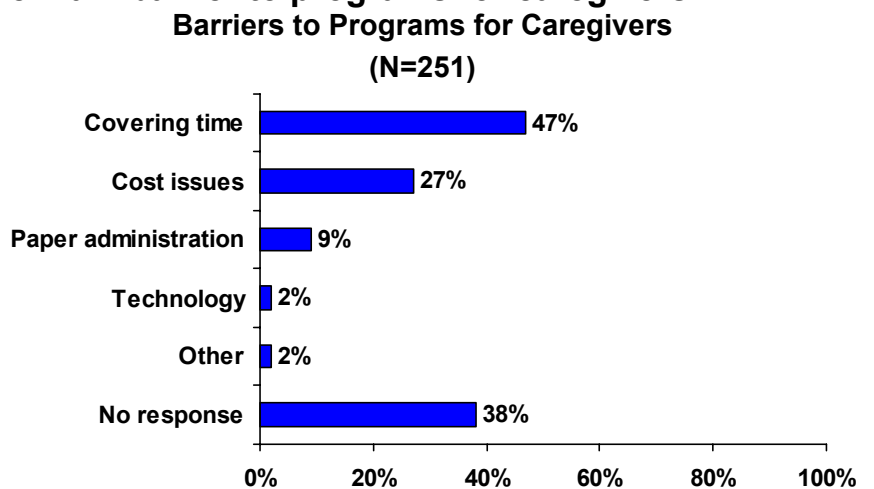
Programs and benefits are offered because management saw a need for them.

Almost six in ten of those respondents offering programs say that these programs and benefits are offered to caregivers because management saw a need for them. A third say that employees asked for such programs, while one in six say they were mandated by the law or by the Family Medical Leave Act.



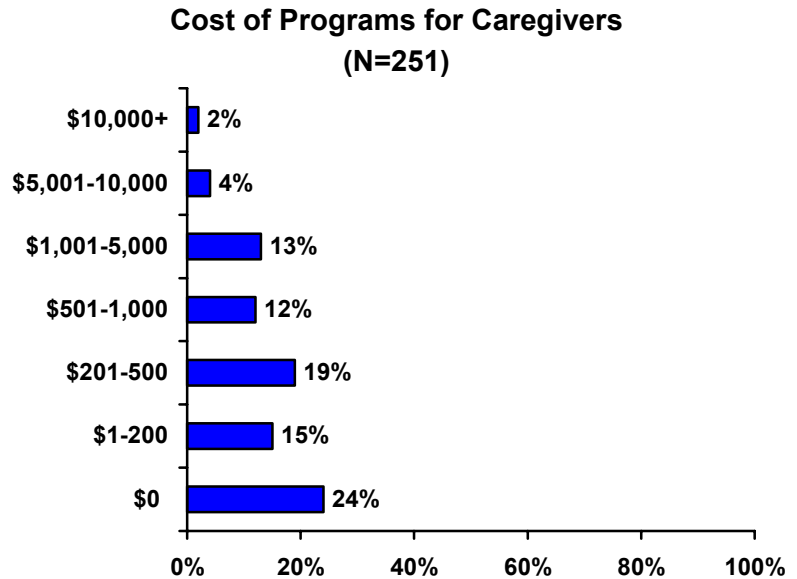
Covering employee's time is the main barrier to programs for caregivers.

Employers that offer benefits were asked about the main barrier to implementing programs and benefits for caregivers. Almost half say that covering the employee's time is the main barrier to getting programs and benefits for caregivers implemented. Three in ten say that cost is a barrier. Almost four in ten did not list a barrier for implementing such programs.



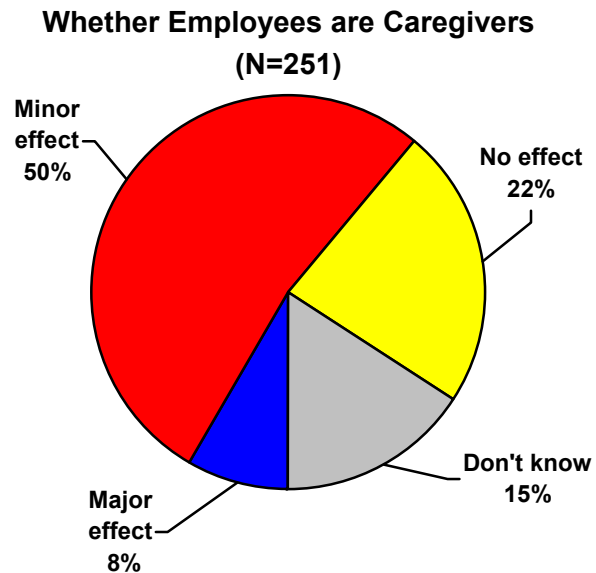
The cost of programs for caregivers varies.

Employers give widely different responses to how much money it costs per year to provide the programs or benefits for caregivers. The cost per person for these benefits is not affected by the size of the company or whether it is non-profit, for-profit, or a government agency. Rather, the cost depends upon the types of programs or benefits offered by the company and their choice of provider.



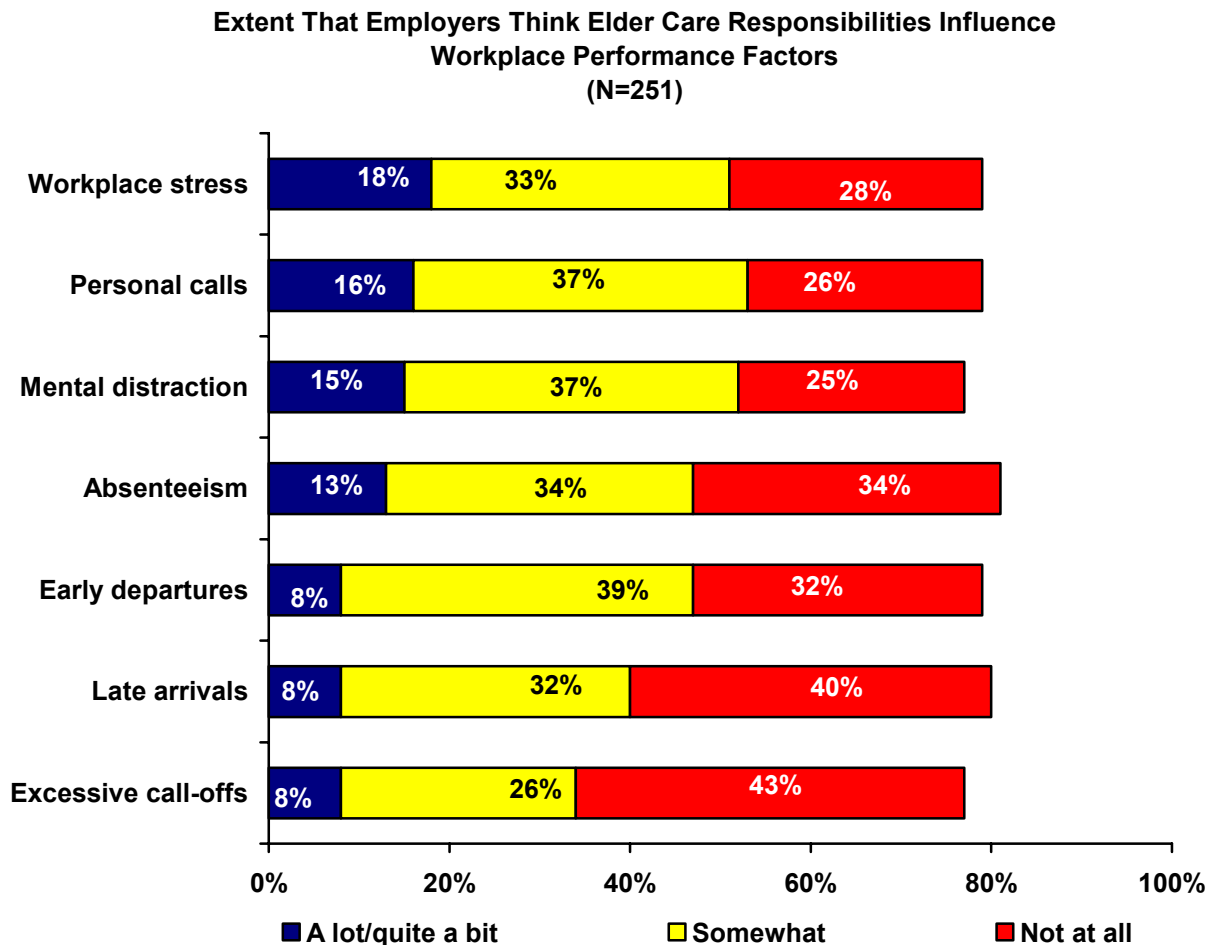
Employers recognize that caregiving affects employee performance.

Employers that offer benefits were asked how much providing caregiving to an older person effects employee performance. Eight percent said it had a major effect, while 50 percent said it had a minor effect. One in seven said they did not know how much caregiving effected employee performance.



Employers are aware that caregiving responsibilities influence employee performance factors.

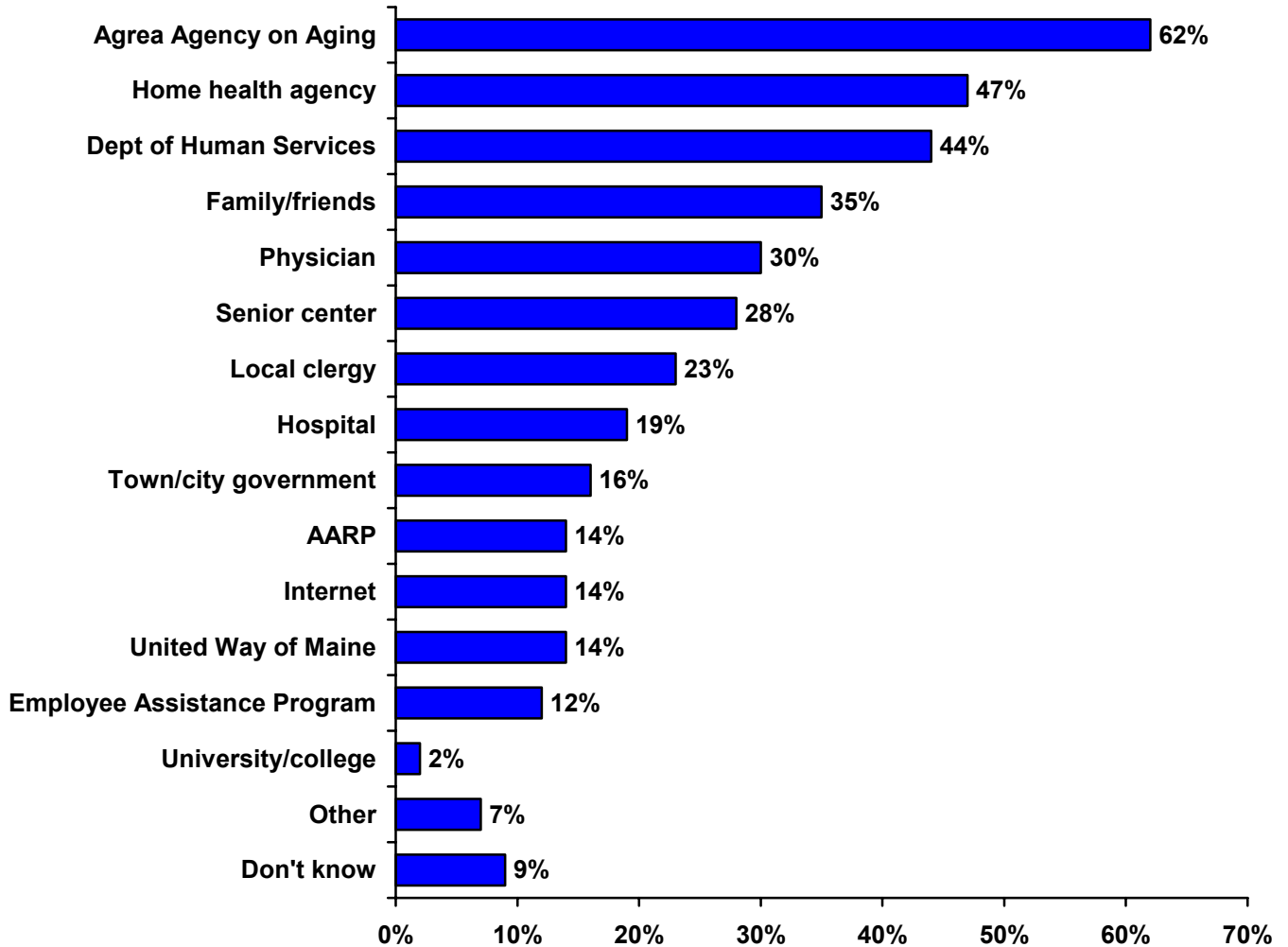
Employers that offer caregiving benefits show awareness of how caregiving responsibilities can influence performance factors such as early departures from work, absenteeism, and mental or emotional distraction. In addition, it should be noted that about a quarter (25%) of respondents were either not sure or gave no response to each of the factors listed (see Appendix A).



Employers would refer employees needing help with caregiving issues to the Area Agency on Aging and home health agencies.

Employers say they are most likely to refer employees with caregiving needs to the Area Agency on Aging or a home health agency. Four in ten would send employees to the Department of Human Services. One in seven would refer employees to AARP.

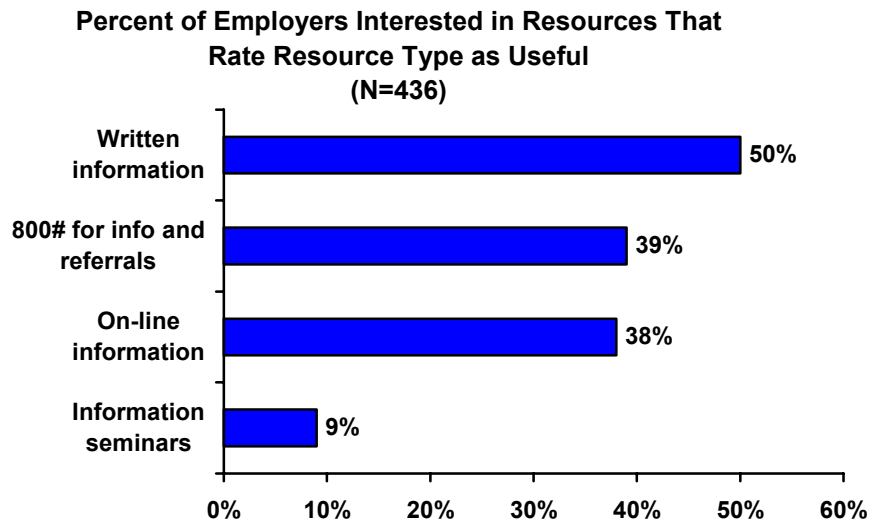
**Where Employers Refer Employees with Caregiving Issues
(n=251)**



Employers want information on caregiving and would prefer that information to be written.

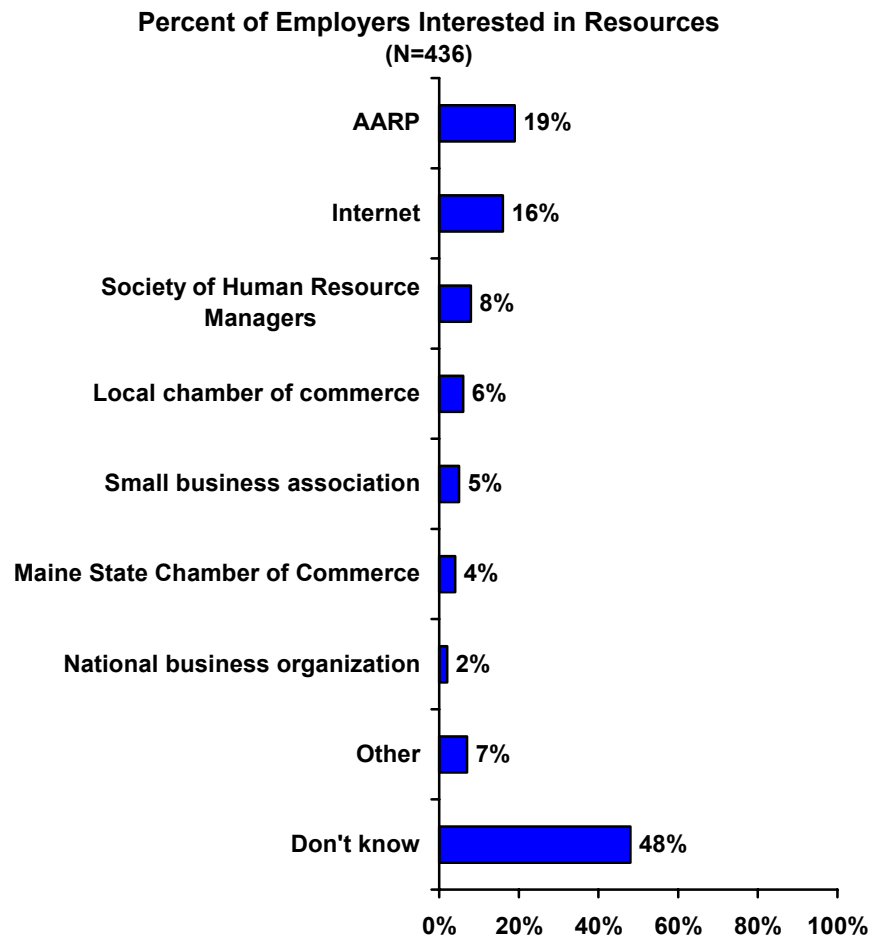
More than half (56%) of employers want information on low- or no-cost resources available for caregivers.

When asked how they would like to receive this information, respondents say they prefer this information to be written or available through an 800 number or on-line.



Employers say they would look to AARP for help in developing an eldercare program.

Two in ten employers say that they would go to AARP for help in developing an eldercare program to aid caregivers. One in six say they would turn to the Internet. However, almost half say they don't know who they would turn to for help.

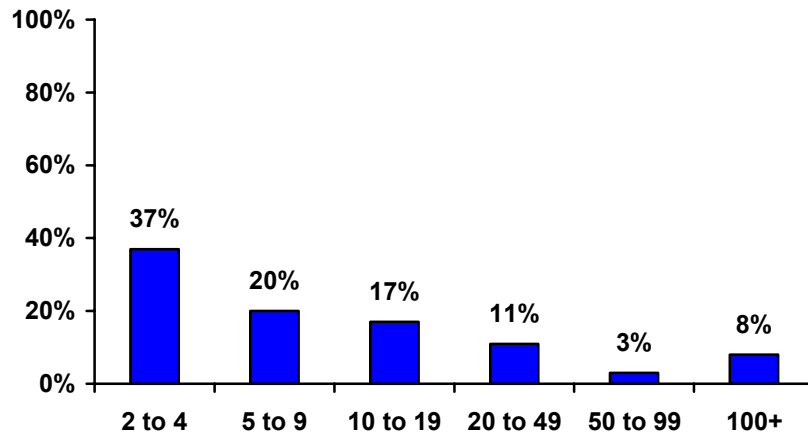


Company Characteristics

Most Maine companies that responded have fewer than ten employees and are for-profit businesses.

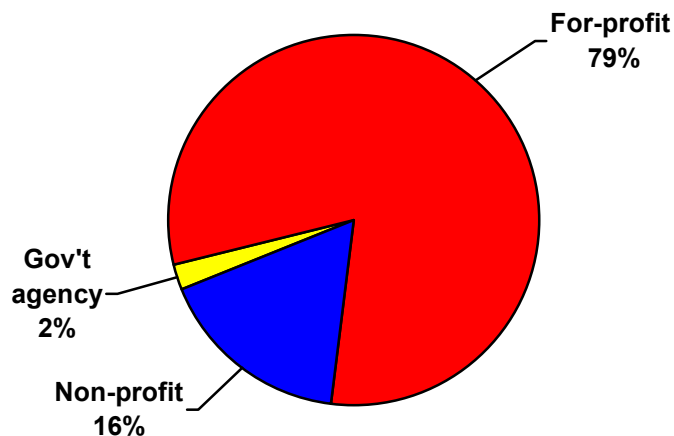
The majority (57%) of Maine companies that responded to the survey have between two and nine employees. Only eleven percent report having over 50 employees.

**Number of Employees in Maine Companies
(N=436)**



The majority of businesses that responded are for-profit and are not part of a larger company (89%). Moreover, nearly all companies in the state (89%) say benefit decisions are made locally and not somewhere else.

**Type of Companies in Maine
(N=436)**



Conclusions

Employers in Maine are aware that their employees are engaged in caregiving activities for family members and loved ones. In addition, employers recognize that caregiving activities affect their employees' work performance, including things like early departures from work, late arrivals, and workplace stress.

Nearly all employers offer some employee benefits, and many offer funeral or bereavement leave, flexible work schedules, and job security to aid those employees who are also caregiving. However, a significant number of employers offer no programs or benefits to caregivers. Employers recognize that more could be done and want information on no- or low-cost resources for caregiving employees.

AARP Maine has the opportunity to take the lead in educating employers on the issues of caregiving in the workplace. When an employee needs information about caregiving, employers list AARP as a resource. AARP Maine faces a unique challenge given the number of small businesses in Maine that may not have the resources available to contract with EAP providers or have human resource managers. These challenges make getting information on caregiving issues and resources even more important in the state of Maine, in order to help employers develop programs for employees who are facing the difficult task of balancing their duties as employees with their duties as caregivers.

Methodology

Survey Sampling, Inc. provided a sample of employers with more than one employee for the state of Maine. A pre-notification letter was then sent to the human resources department of 2,242 businesses in the state of Maine with more than one employee. This was followed by the survey itself, a reminder postcard, and a second copy of the survey. The entire process was conducted between March 26 and May 10, 2004. 436 (19%) of the businesses contacted responded to the survey. This survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 4.2 percent.

Appendix
Annotated Questionnaire

2003 Employers and Eldercare Survey

WEIGHTED N = 436, RESPONSE RATE = 19 %, SAMPLING ERROR = 4.2 +/- %
(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. A “*” means less than 1%.)

1. How many people work either full or part time in your company in the state of Maine?

<u>%</u>	
37	2-4
20	5-9
17	10-19
11	20-49
3	50-99
8	100 or more
0	Don't know
4	No Response

2. Are any of your employees offered any benefits, such as health insurance or paid time off?

<u>%</u>	
74	Yes
24	No
*	Don't know
2	No Response

A caregiver can be anyone who provides unpaid help to a relative or friend who is ill, disabled, or elderly. This kind of help includes assistance with bathing, dressing, preparing meals, taking medications, doing household chores, taking care of finances, arranging for outside services, or regularly visiting the person needing care. The relative or friend you are helping may be someone who lives with you or somewhere else.

3. In the past two years, have any of your employees provided care or assistance to an older person (including a spouse, parent, other relative, or friend)?

<u>%</u>	
46	Yes
39	No [SKIP TO Q5]
12	Don't know [SKIP TO Q5]
3	No Response

4. Approximately what percentage of your employees do you think are providing care or assistance to an older person? (n=200)

<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>	
37	0-5%	11	50-69%
15	6-10%	8	70% or more
5	11-19%	1	Other:
9	20-29%	9	Not sure
4	30-39%	2	No response
2	40-49%		

5. Have any of your employees asked for time off to assist an older person?

<u>%</u>	
33	Yes
61	No
3	Not sure
3	No Response

6. Have any of your employees requested time off under the Family Medical Leave Act to assist an older person?

<u>%</u>	
7	Yes
89	No
2	Not sure
2	No Response

7. Do you believe your employees would be *comfortable* asking for time off to take care of or assist an older person?

<u>%</u>	
78	Yes
6	No
14	Not sure
3	No Response

8. If an employee took time off to take care of or assist an older person, what kind of leave would they use? Would they use....

<u>%</u>	
19	Paid vacation leave
5	Paid sick leave
38	Unpaid leave
37	All of the above (vacation, sick, and unpaid leave)
9	Other (Please Specify _____)
9	Don't know
3	No Response

9. Does your company have an Employee Assistance Program?

<u>%</u>	
8	Yes
84	No
5	Not sure
3	No Response

10. Does your company offer any of the following services or programs for employees who are caring for an older person? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

<u>%</u>	
1	Financial help through a special fund that employees contribute to voluntarily
6	Additional personal leave to be used for eldercare
4	Allow employees the opportunity to donate their sick time to another employee who is caring for an older relative
36	Flexible work schedule to accommodate time needed to provide eldercare
2	Support groups
5	Information and referral assistance to help find eldercare providers and resources
33	Job security for employee who need to take time off to provide eldercare
6	Telecommuting or allowing employees to work from home
5	Job sharing
2	Information about eldercare through seminars or written materials
4	Referrals to individual counseling
13	Compressed workweek that allows employees to work longer but fewer days
41	Funeral/bereavement leave
0	Subsidized care or care vouchers
2	Other (Please specify): _____
39	No services are offered [SKIP TO Q19]
3	No Response

11. On average, how well would you say the above program(s)/benefit(s) that are offered to caregivers are utilized? (n=251)

<u>%</u>	
20	Very well utilized
43	Somewhat utilized
7	Not well utilized
11	Not at all utilized
14	Don't know
4	No Response

12. On average, how long has the above program(s)/benefit(s) been in place? (n=251)

<u>%</u>	
1	Less than 6 months
1	Between 6-12 months
4	Between 1-2 years
16	Between 2-5 years
63	5 years or more
10	Don't know
4	No Response

13. What were the circumstances that led to the above programs(s)/benefit(s) being offered? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY) (n=251)

<u>%</u>	
34	Employees asked for it
57	Management saw a need
*	Another company implemented program successfully
3	Insurance offering
4	Union/labor negotiation
16	Law/FMLA
16	Other:
6	No Response

14. Were there any barriers to getting the program(s)/benefit(s) mentioned in question 10 implemented? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY) (n=251)

<u>%</u>	
27	Cost issues
9	Increased paperwork/administrative issues
47	Covering the employee's time
2	Technology issues
6	Other: (Please Specify _____)
38	No Response

15. About how much do you think it costs a year to provide the programs/benefits listed in Question 10 per employee? (n=251)

<u>%</u>	
24	\$0
15	\$1-200
19	\$201-500
12	\$501-1,000
13	\$1,001-5,000
4	\$5,001-10,000
2	\$10,001 plus
11	No response

16. To what extent do you think eldercare responsibilities influence the following performance factors in your company? (n=251)

	A lot	Quite a bit	Somewhat	Not at all	Not Sure	No Response
a. Workplace stress	5%	13%	33%	28%	13%	8%
b. Absenteeism	3%	10%	34%	34%	10%	9%
c. Late arrivals to work	3%	5%	32%	40%	10%	10%
d. Early departures from work	3%	5%	39%	32%	9%	11%
e. Mental/emotional distraction	4%	11%	37%	25%	13%	10%
f. The amount of personal calls made at work	4%	12%	37%	26%	12%	9%
g. Excessive sick days/call-offs	2%	6%	26%	43%	12%	11%

17. How much do you think providing care or assistance to an older person affects employee performance in your company or business? (n=251)

<u>%</u>	
8	Major effect
50	Minor effect
22	No effect
15	Don't know
6	No Response

18. If an employee was having difficulty caring for an older person and came to you for assistance, where would you refer the employee for help? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY) (n=251)

<u>%</u>	
62	Area Agency on Aging
16	Town/city government office
44	Department of Human Services
19	Hospital
2	Nearby university or college
14	United Way of Maine
35	Family/friends
23	Local clergy
30	Physician
28	Senior center
12	Employee assistance program
14	AARP
14	Internet
47	Home health agency
7	Other: _____
9	Don't know
4	No Response

19. If there were low- or no-cost resources available for employees caring for older persons, would you be interested in having or knowing about these resources?

%
56 Yes
15 No
19 Don't know
10 No Response

20. What kind of resources do you think would be useful?

%
50 Written information
38 On-line information
9 Information seminars
39 An 800 number for information and referrals
1 Other: _____
17 Don't know
9 No Response

21. If you wanted to establish an eldercare program that provided assistance to those caring for an older spouse, parent, relative, or friend at your company, where would you go for assistance?

%
6 Local chamber of commerce
19 AARP
2 A national business education organization
5 Small business association
8 Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM)
4 Maine State Chamber of Commerce
16 Internet
7 Other: _____
48 Don't know
10 No Response

Demographic Information

The following questions are for classification purposes only.

22. What best describes your company?

%
16 Non-profit
77 For-profit
2 Government agency
5 No Response

23. Are you part of a larger company or organization?

<u>%</u>	
8	Yes
89	No [SKIP TO Q25]
0	Don't know [SKIP TO Q25]
4	No Response

24. Approximately how many employees does your company or organization have nationwide? _____ (n=34)

<u>%</u>	
21	Less than 50
9	50-100
6	101-500
9	501-5000
12	5001 or more
44	No Response

25. Are employee benefit decisions made locally, at your location, or are they made somewhere else, such as company headquarters?

<u>%</u>	
89	On location
5	Somewhere else
1	Don't know
5	No Response

26. Approximately what percentage of your employees in Maine are female?

<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>	
27	0-10%	10	41-50%
6	11-20%	8	51-60%
3	21-30%	9	61-70%
6	31-40%	26	71% or more
		4	No Response

27. What would you say the average age for employees is at your company?

<u>%</u>	
7	18-29
58	30-45
29	45+
6	No Response

28. Approximately what percentage of your employees in Maine work less than 20 hours a week?

<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>	
64	0-10%	8	41-50%
9	11-20%	2	51-60%
6	21-30%	1	61-70%
4	31-40%	4	71% or more
		3	No Response

29. What area of Maine is your company located in?

<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>	
6	Androscoggin	4	Oxford
8	Aroostook	11	Penobscot
18	Cumberland	1	Piscataquis
2	Franklin	2	Sagadahoc
5	Hancock	4	Somerset
7	Kennebec	4	Waldo
4	Knox	3	Washington
6	Lincoln	11	York
		4	No Response

Thank you for completing this survey. Please use the postage-paid envelope and return it to State Member Research, AARP, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049, by **May 10, 2004**.

AARP
Knowledge Management
For more information contact Erica Dinger (202) 434-6176