

As seen in



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## Recognizing the hard work of a caregiver

**O**n Oct. 30, the president of the United States again declared November “National Family Caregivers Month.” Each year, we in the home-care industry mark this month by promoting support for and awareness of the often-invisible millions of families and individuals dedicated to caring for loved ones. It has been estimated that the number of these dutiful families is around 50 million and growing.

“The true strength of the American family finds its roots in an unwavering commitment to care for one another,” said President Barack Obama in his declaration of Family Caregivers Month. As someone who has personally experienced acting as a caregiver for a loved one, those words ring particularly true to me. It was the experience of being a caregiver to my own mother for her final 18 years that inspired my family to provide home-care services to others.

**Bob Roth**



The need for awareness is especially great as the baby boomer generation continues to age. The impact of this will cause a rapid growth in the number of families taking care of loved ones, creating an even greater demand for caregivers in our society. This is why awareness is of the utmost importance and this month is of such great value.

According to John W. Rowe, a professor of health policy and management at Columbia University and a former president of the Gerontological Society of America, the combination of aging baby boomers and the increase in life expectancy is going to lead to a doubling of the 65-and-over population by 2050. Much of the responsibility accompanying that unprecedented growth will be placed on the friends and families of the aging population.

In order to prepare for the coming tidal wave, we should expand our current efforts to provide training for prospective health-care providers, increase awareness of home-care needs and establish additional support groups for those taking care of the elderly and disabled. We at Cypress HomeCare Solutions recognize this need and have made it part of our mission to help train family caregivers at no cost. To date, we have trained more than 500 families in our “caregiver training lab.”

Congress recently voiced its support of the home-care industry in an overwhelmingly affirmative vote. The resolution outlines the challenges being faced by the home-care industry and officially recognizes care-giving as a profession. It also expresses support for the private home-care industry and the efforts of family caregivers nationwide by encouraging individuals to provide care to family, friends and neighbors. The resolution also reveals that more than 25 percent of all seniors have come to need some level of assistance with their everyday personal needs.

On a local level, there are many organizations trying to make a difference for caregivers as well as those being cared for. These organizations include the Arizona Chapter of the National Private Duty Association, the Arizona Non-Medical Home Care Association and the Arizona Coalition for Home Care Consumer Protection. These organizations, and others like them, answer the need for advocacy and education in the home-care industry.

Although we set aside the month of November to honor family caregivers, we should recognize the hard work and dedication of these individuals each and every day of the year. It can be emotionally taxing, but extremely rewarding. For this and so many other reasons, those serving as caregivers need our help and support to continue to do the critical work that we, as a community, have come to rely on.

*Bob Roth is the managing partner of Cypress HomeCare Solutions. Visit [cypresshomecare.com](http://cypresshomecare.com) or call 602-264-8009.*