

Caring for the Carers:

An Advocacy Proposal for Family Caregiver Capacitation, Well-being and Support in a Tertiary Government Hospital

Gianica Reena S. Monteagudo, MD, MBA | Philippine General Hospital

BACKGROUND

Family caregivers (CGs) are essential partners in the informal care system, providing crucial support for their family members and/or loved ones. Family CGs address physical, medical, psychological, financial, and social needs, often leading to caregiver burden over time. This can manifest as depression, anxiety, acute illness, and chronic diseases.

This proposal outlines an advocacy strategy to promote caregiver (CG) health and well-being within the Philippine General Hospital (PGH), a tertiary government hospital, through holistic, preventive, compassionate, and multidisciplinary care for families.

METHODS

- Situational analysis** on factors contributing to caregiver burden
 - Characterization of caregiver burden as a health problem
 - Assessment of social needs, epidemiological data, educational and ecological contexts, including policies in PGH and the Philippines
 - Integration using **Pearlin's Caregiver Stress Process Model** to analyze factors affecting burden
- Formulation of intervention opportunities in PGH**
 - Scoping review of international and local policy and practice models
 - Force field analysis to describe enabling and restraining forces for intervention opportunities and prescribe initial action areas

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

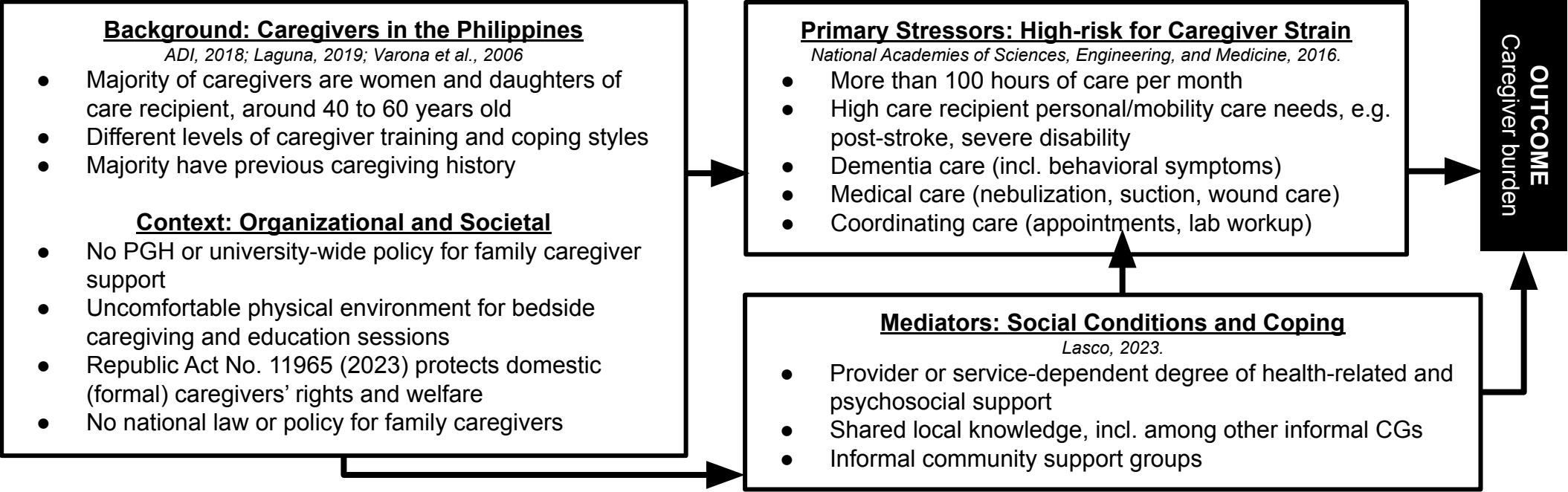


Figure 1. Determinants affecting caregiver health in the Philippine General Hospital (simplified). Pearlin's Caregiver Stress Process Model (1990) was utilized to integrate the analysis of contextual factors contributing to caregiver burden. **Secondary stressors**, not depicted in this figure, include family conflict, work conflict, and financial strain arising from caregiving activities and contributing to risk of CG strain.

FORMULATION OF INTERVENTION

POLICY MODELS for Adaptation

A National Caregiving Strategy for Canada
Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, 2025

Policy on key areas of action to address caregiving crisis, including financial support, sustainability, and training.

Framework for Caregiver Interventions
National Academies Press, 2016.

Framework for reviewing family caregiving interventions, on societal, organizational, and individual/social level

PRACTICE MODELS for Integration and Scaling

MODIFIED CAREGIVER STRAIN INDEX (MCSI)			
LAGAYAN NG TUNG (I) ANG KAHON NG TUNG NAPIKANG SAHAY	Modular (II)	Particular (III)	Whole (IV)
1. Nais ko pong malaman kung paano ko magagamit ang mga... 2. Ang mga... 3. Ang mga... 4. Nais ko pong... 5. Ang mga... 6. Nais ko pong... 7. Ang mga... 8. Ang mga... 9. Ang mga... 10. Ang mga... 11. Ang mga... 12. Ang mga... 13. Ang mga... 14. Ang mga... 15. Ang mga... 16. Ang mga... 17. Ang mga... 18. Ang mga... 19. Ang mga... 20. Ang mga...			

MCSI Questionnaire to Screen for Caregiver Strain
PGH Dept. of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM)

Use of Modified Caregiver Strain Index for families of patients enrolled in the Family Health Services unit

Online Caregiver Training Workshop
National Children's Hospital - Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics

Regular webinars and fora on social media platform

Home Care Instructions

Home Care Instructions
PGH Div. of Supportive, Hospice & Palliative Medicine

Home care skills and needs checklist in Filipino provided during discharge planning

'Bukas Puso at Isip' Family Support Group
PGH Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine

Monthly disease-based peer and facilitated support group with counselor and family caregivers

PROPOSED STRATEGY

POLICY PRINCIPLES

- CAREGIVER-CENTERED HEALTH CARE SERVICES**, prioritizing screening families at high risk for CG burden
- ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION** featuring standardized psychoeducational materials on various caregiving and illness-related topics shared on website and social media
- SOCIAL ORGANIZATION** through informal and facilitated family caregiver support groups
- SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT** with community and institutional mobilization for respite care and resources

INITIAL ACTION

- ✓ Centralize and standardize existing **home care instruction materials and guides** from different medical and surgical services
- ✓ Scale up **caregiver burden screening** currently being offered by the DFCM Family Health Services unit, and offer to all families at high-risk for strain across other services and clinical settings
- ✓ Institutionalize **monthly family education and peer support groups** for patients and families

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: This advocacy proposal suggests a protocol for caregiver health promotion within a tertiary government hospital which focuses on high-impact areas affecting the caregiver, their family, and the local environment by addressing four principle intervention areas. Initial and intermediate action includes the integration, scaling and improvement of existing efforts, while lobbying for institutional support for resource mobilization and environmental modification. Collaboration from hospital administrators, healthcare providers, caregivers and their families is crucial to achieve improved caregiver well-being and care outcomes for both family caregivers and the care recipients.

REFERENCES: [1] Alzheimer's Disease International. 2018. Global estimates of informal care. ADI and Karolinska Institute; [2] Lasco G. 2023. Notes on the 'bantay' system. In Philippine Inquirer; [3] Laguna EP. 2019. Caring for older persons, in GT Cruz, CJP Cruz and Y Saito (eds), Ageing and Health in the Philippines. Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia; [4] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2016. Families Caring for an Aging America; [5] Pearlin et al. 1990. Caregiving and the stress process: an overview of concepts and their measures. The Gerontologist; [6] Varona R et al. 2006. Caregiving in the Philippines: a quantitative survey on adult-child caregivers' perceptions of burden, stressors, and social support. Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics.

