



**JB Pritzker, Governor**  
**Paula A. Basta, M.Div., Director**

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*Respect for Yesterday*  
*Support for Today*  
*Plan for Tomorrow*

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**Find A Vaccine  
Location**

**IDoA COVID-19 Resources**

November 19, 2021

Dear Aging Network:

November is National Family Caregivers Month, a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country. According to an [AARP survey](#), half of registered voters age 40 and older in Illinois are currently providing care to an adult loved one or have done so previously. I and so many of you are among the estimated 53 million family caregivers nationwide who support the health, quality of life, and independence of a close relative, and I know it can be challenging, regardless of whether you're caring for someone living in the same household, the same neighborhood, or [far away](#).

We in the aging services sector know that caregiving is an act of love and compassion. At the same time, it's one of the toughest jobs there is, especially [during a global pandemic](#). Many family caregivers are balancing caretaking responsibilities with [full-time work](#), raising children, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and other personal needs. It's normal to feel stressed and burnt out while wearing so many hats—but you shouldn't feel that way all the time. Below are some resources that are available to help you [care for yourself](#) along with [your loved one](#).

- [AARP Family Caregiving Guides](#) – available in English, Spanish, and Chinese, as well as for specific audiences, including military families and members of the LGBTQ community.
- [AARP Family Caregivers Facebook Group](#)
- [AARP Family Caregiving Website](#)
- [National Resources for Family Caregivers](#)

You can also read President Biden's National Family Caregivers Month proclamation [here](#).

Despite the 24/7 demands of caregiving, it's important for caregivers to maintain their own sense of identity. This year's theme of National Family Caregiving Month is [#CaregiverAnd](#), which encourages family caregivers to celebrate the passions that enrich their lives. Not only for caregivers but for everyone, making time for your interests and hobbies can help you avoid burnout. I know it's easier said than done with shorter days, colder weather, and the busy holiday season on the horizon, but it's incredibly important. As the saying goes, you can't pour from an empty cup.

Speaking of pouring—wine and gravy, that is—Thanksgiving is around the corner, and I hope you're looking forward to spending quality time with family and friends over the next few days. This year, I am grateful for vaccines that allow us to [gather safely](#), and as always, I am grateful for YOU! Thank you for your commitment to older adults and their caregivers throughout Illinois.

If you're traveling out of town this Thanksgiving, prepare now for a safe trip by following [these tips](#). Also, consider getting your COVID booster shot before you go, and encourage your loved ones to get theirs as well.

As a reminder, IDoA recently hosted a presentation on all things booster shot-related with Dr. Catherine Counard. You can access the recording [here](#).  
Again, thank you for everything you do to enrich the lives of older adults. Wishing you a very happy and healthy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,



Paula Basta, M.Div.  
Director, Illinois Department on Aging

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The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the **Senior HelpLine at (800) 252-8966; (888) 206-1327 (TTY)**

