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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Survey Reveals Public Misperception of Training Received by In-Home Caregivers of Older Adults

NEW YORK (April 16, 2007)— In spite of the United States having no national training requirements for professional in-home caregivers of older adults, an alarming 78 percent of those who hired such caregivers believe they had received formal training, according to a Harris Interactive Survey released today. The survey, conducted for The Caregiving Project for Older Americans, underscores the growing misperception the American public has regarding the training of those taking care of older adults in the home.

“The public has a dangerous misperception about the amount of training these in-home caregivers are receiving. The truth is that professional caregivers today are often unskilled or poorly trained,” says Dr. Larry Wright, co-director of The Caregiving Project for Older Americans and director of the Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education. “Neither independent contractors who work as in-home paid caregivers, nor caregivers who receive training through their for-profit agency or community program, must adhere to national standards. Consequently, training is usually haphazard and spotty at best.”

In-Home Caregiver Training

The survey found that among adults who have used or paid for an in-home caregiver for someone age 65 or older, more than three quarters (78 percent) stated that in their opinion their caregiver had formal training, 14 percent did not know if they had received training, and 8 percent believed their caregiver received no training.

“With the increase of life expectancy [77.9 in the United States], large numbers of older adults are living with increased chronic disease, frailty and dementia,” explained Dr. Robert Butler, co-director of The Caregiving Project for Older Americans and president and CEO of the International Longevity Center-USA. “In-home caregivers need special training to care for the complex issues associated with caring for older adults.”

Prevalence of In-Home Caregiving in the United States

In addition to the training of caregivers, the survey researched the overall prevalence of in-home caregiving for older adults in the United States. Out of 1,030 adults, 8 percent of respondents reported that they have used and/or paid for the services of a paid in-home caregiver for someone age 65 or older in the last 12 months. Among those who have used or paid for an in-home care giver, 44 percent were paying out-of-pocket for at least some of the costs.

Working as an In-Home Caregiver

Out of 2,423 adult panelists, 3 percent reported that they worked either full time or part time as a paid in-home caregiver for someone 65 or older. Of those that worked as a paid home health care provider 43 percent reported that they worked full-time and the remainder worked part-time.

In response to the need for well-trained caregivers in the home, The Caregiving Project for Older Americans, a joint collaboration between the International Longevity Center-USA and the Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education, recently held a conference with top experts in caregiving, geriatric medicine, nursing, health policy and social work, to begin to develop a national core-curriculum to be used in caregiver education. A conference report, to be published in Fall 2007, will recommend steps to develop and standardize in-home caregiver training.

Methodology

In late 2006 and early 2007, Harris Interactive conducted survey research on behalf of the The Caregiving Project for Older Americans to identify the prevalence of in-home caregiving in the United States. Four separate surveys were conducted among 6,589 U.S. adults (aged 18+). Two of the surveys were conducted by telephone omnibus to explore the use of paid in-home caregivers. The other two surveys were conducted on a Harris Interactive online omnibus among the Harris Poll Online Panel to assess how many Americans have worked as a paid in-home caregiver.

About The Caregiving Project for Older Americans

The Caregiving Project for Older Americans is an action-oriented collaboration that aims to improve the nation's caregiving workforce through training, the establishment of standards, and the creation of a career ladder. Bolstering support for family caregivers is another major goal of the project. A joint venture of the International Longevity Center-USA (ILC-USA) and the Schmieding Center for Senior Health & Education (SCSHE), the effort combines the talents of a policy research center with a clinical outpatient and health education program. To learn more about the project visit

<http://www.ilcusa.org/prj/caregiving.htm>.