

## Who Says Men Can't Be Caregivers Too?

When we refer to caregivers, the media often focuses on the adult female daughter. Of the 43.5 million adults who provide senior care, nearly two out of three are female, according to [a report published by AARP](#) and the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC). However, this means that one out of three caregivers — about 14.5 million — are men. That's a significant number: about 6 percent of all adults in the United States. Male caregivers are fast becoming more and more prevalent and breaking down gender-specific stereotypes.

Although it is true that women are brought up to be more nurturing, in certain ways it's just more comfortable -- particularly for mothers -- to have their daughters take care of personal care: bathing, grooming, hairdressing, etc. It's no wonder statistics show that 40% of men hire caregivers to take care of their parents' personal care.

Take for instance, Dr. Thomas Hoess, 57, a resident of Valparaiso, Indiana. As a busy physician and father of two kids, his comfortable lifestyle was shredded five years ago by two events: the death of his father who was a caregiver for his mother, and a diagnosis of crippling rheumatoid arthritis for his wife.

"My Mother did not want to leave Arizona and move to Indiana because the winters are too cold here," says Thomas. "Therefore, I was suddenly faced with providing long distance care. First, we placed my Mom in an assisted living facility and she hated it. The guilt was killing me. Then we switched her back home with 24/7 caregivers.

"Thank goodness for programs like FirstLight's Client Care access, a web-based tool that gives you constant updates about what's going on," said Thomas. "Between her caregiver and Skype, that is my lifeline in between visits. When people ask me if in-home care is expensive I reply 'what price can you put on my sanity?' My parents saved their whole lives for circumstances such as this."

One problem solved. However, his wife's diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis has been life-altering for the whole family as two hip placements and constant bouts of asthma have contributed to her decline in health.

"I'll be honest. As the sole breadwinner, in the past I would go to work and my wife would handle everything at home. I didn't even know how to do laundry, yet alone cook! I'm still the master at take-out, but I've learned to run errands and do household chores. My two sons are great at pitching in also. However, without our part-time caregiver, our house would be run like a scene from Animal House!" concluded Thomas.

Whether it's male or female, caregivers are all about providing superior care for a family member or friend. After all, many parents took care of their kids for at least 18 years, so we see are taking care of them as both an honor and a responsibility.

Caregiving men, albeit fewer in number, are just as dedicated at taking care of their loved one as best as they can. If you need help with caregiving for a loved one, visit our website at [www.firstlighthousecare.com](http://www.firstlighthousecare.com) for the caregivers nearest you.