Addressing the Financial Burden of Caregiving:

Guaranteed Income and Financial Treatment (GIFT) Trial

Strategies and Interventions to Strengthen Support for Family Caregiving and to Alleviate Caregiver Burden: A Workshop

National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, Washington D.C.

June 5, 2025

Meredith Doherty, PhD, LCSW
Assistant Professor
School of Social Policy and Practice
University of Pennsylvania

Penn
Social Policy & Practice
University of Pennsylvania

The financial burden of caregiving

+ Over **40 million** family caregivers in the U.S. (60% women)
+ Average caregiver works **~26 hours / week**
+ **~$375B/year unpaid labor** = est. $3T lifetime earnings, pensions, and benefits **lost**
+ Financial burden due to out-of-pocket health costs and lost income **accumulates over time**
+ Caregiver financial burden associated with increased **depression, anxiety and chronic health conditions**
+ Socioeconomic disparities

Caregiver financial burdens remain largely unaddressed

+ Just 11 states have implemented **paid family leave**
+ All 50 states offer **consumer directed** benefit – *only half allow spouses to be paid*
+ Average compensation for a family caregiver is $15 to $16/hour
+ Gaps:

  Awareness, Medicaid only, low pay, administrative complexity

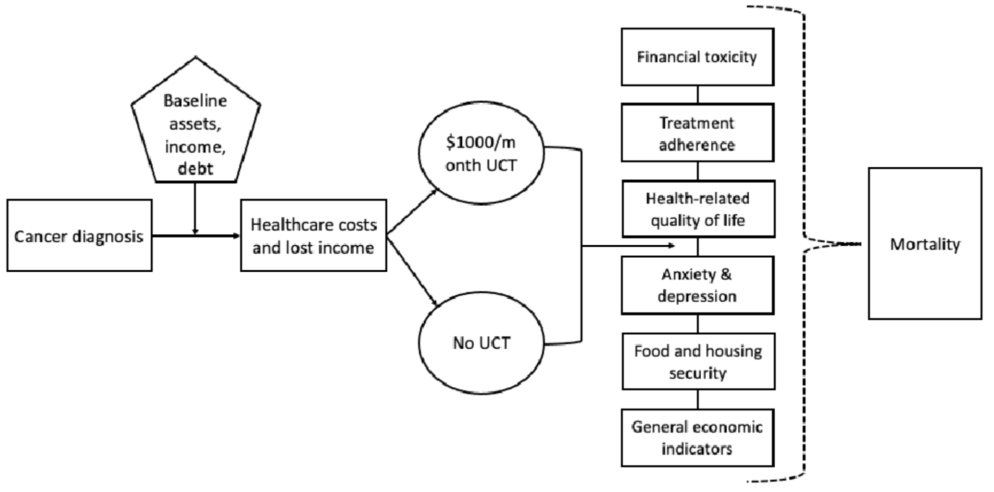
Is there a better solution?

"I am now convinced that **the simplest approach will prove to be the most effective** — the solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: **the guaranteed income**."

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Guaranteed income is recurrent, unconditional and unrestricted
- Relatively low administrative burden for payer and recipient
- Supported by strong scientific evidence

Guaranteed Income and Financial Treatment (GIFT) Trial



+ Randomized controlled trial of unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) for Medicaid beneficiaries with advanced cancer and their families.
+ Intervention: $1000 per month for 12 months deposited directly into debit account
+ Sample: over 200 Philadelphia-area individuals and families – 100 received UCT
+ Outcomes:

  Patients: Financial stress, depression, anxiety, quality of life, access/adherence to care, total healthcare cost and utilization (cost effectiveness) and mortality

  Caregivers: Long-term employment, earnings, use of public benefits, health, and mental health