

Dear Caregiver,

We see you. *You hold your family together. Your energy seems boundless; your commitment is palpable. I was convinced that you could do no more and then you took your mom into your home. Now your work is never finished. She cries out to you in the middle of the night just as your children did so many years ago and you respond, as you did then, with patience and kindness. We call you a **family caregiver** but this label doesn't feel quite right—you say you are a mother, wife, sister and daughter first. It is clear that caregiving is in your soul, but it does not define you.*

We admire you. *You are tenacious but humble. You ask for nothing in return for your efforts but your face lights up to small gestures of gratitude. You demonstrate compassion in the face of constant exhaustion. You cook, clean, transport, and translate. You reconcile and administer medicines, pay bills, act as health care proxy and power of attorney. You maintain a career despite spending as many hours each week managing family and coordinating care as you do at work. You prove that grace is not just a word but a state of being.*

We worry about you. *Increasingly, you compromise taking care of yourself, always putting others first. Your fatigue has led to poor eating habits and weight loss. You are becoming more isolated from friends and family. You recently expressed your loneliness and I am concerned about what that implies. You will always trade things most precious to you in favor of those you love, who always seem to need more.*

We thank you. *You and 44 million of your fellow caregivers around the country are the foundation of our healthcare system, providing over \$500 billion each year of uncompensated care. Without that commitment, our very society would be in peril. As Americans, we all owe you a debt of gratitude.*

I am proud to know you. Thank you for your service to our country.

With appreciation,



*Thomas P. Riley
Chief Executive Officer and President
Seniorlink
Boston, Massachusetts*

#thankacaregiver