

American Medical Women's Association
Position Paper on Dependent Care

The American Medical Women's Association (AMWA), an organization of women physicians and medical students, has as one of its major missions the advocacy for and support of programs which improve the health of women and their families. Now that more mothers are working outside their homes, and because of the aging of our population, more adult children (usually, women) are caring for their elderly parents. AMWA is especially concerned about the growing need for affordable dependent care for the dependent populations--children and the elderly.

Scores of women in all walks of life are affected by the lack of affordable dependent care. Many working women are responsible for care of aging parents or other relatives who have become unable to care fully for themselves. Single and poor mothers are traumatized when forced to make use of makeshift child care arrangements which are often substandard. Women in professional training, as well as those in the early years of their careers, are also affected by the lack of dependable, good quality and affordable child care facilities. Work-site facilities would be of value for all working parents and their children. On-site day care would also benefit employers in terms of recruitment and retention of staff. These facilities must meet responsible standards for health, safety, and life stage needs.

Dependent care serves as a needed and responsible supplement to care provided by family members. Affordable dependent care provides additional strength to families and allows more families to contribute to the economy. A well thought-out program of care and education must be developed.

On the basis of these judgments, the American Medical Women's Association advocates for the passage of legislation and funding that will allow for affordable day care programs for children and the elderly.

REFERENCES

Universal access to good-quality education and care of children from birth to 5 years. American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption and Dependent Care. *Pediatrics* 1996 Mar;97(3):417-9

Buffardi LC et al. The impact of dependent-care responsibility and gender on work attitudes. *J Occup Health Psychol* 1999 Oct;4(4):356-67

Moritz KL. Who takes care of the caregiver's children. *J Am Med Womens Assoc* 1992 May-Jun;47(3):77-81

Adopted by the House of Delegates
October 1989
Revised 2000