Foreword

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Caregiving, in my family, is an act of love and honor—and an expectation. When I was a child, my uncle, who was severely affected by polio, lived with my family. The rhythm of his care saw me lace his intricate leg and back braces in the morning and my mother handle his doctors’ visits in the daytime. Come night, my father—dead-tired from long days and evenings driving a taxi—would lift his brother onto his back and carry him up the stairs to bed.

When my mother died suddenly from a stroke after my first year in medical school, there was no question about who would care for my aging grandparents. In my mid-20s, I quickly came to understand both the nobility and the intensity of caregiving. I balanced medical school and the launch of my medical career with the demands of caring for my elders and starting a family of my own. The pressure only increased as my Alzheimer’s-stricken grandmother declined before my eyes.

We all have mixed feelings about caregiving. We hear it described as the pinnacle of human compassion—and we take heart in that. But we also struggle to manage caregiving and career, especially given a tight economy, a highly mobile society, and our own aging and health challenges. Millions of us have both young children and aging parents staking
claims to our time, energy, aspirations, and relationships. We often find ourselves in uncharted territory, fearing loss of control.

*Juggling Life, Work, and Caregiving* from AARP and the American Bar Association will help you stay in control, especially at the important decision points of your life. Author Amy Goyer, a well-respected professional in this arena and a caregiver for her own parents, offers practical advice on the caregiving challenge and helps you deal with the essential details of managing finances, medical care, and daily work, as well as the crises that inevitably come with caregiving.

This publication affirms the worth of caregiving but also speaks to the powerful, often confusing emotions that come with it. *Juggling Life, Work, and Caregiving* fully recognizes the importance of taking care of you and helps you do so without guilt.

Pfizer sponsored the first iteration of this book, *Juggling Work and Caregiving*, because we believe that caregivers are both essential to our society and underappreciated within it. We honor caregivers and advocate for them. You will find this publication highly useful on its own and as a gateway to other helpful resources. These include AARP’s Caregiving Resource Center at www.aarp.org/caregiving and two Pfizer-sponsored sites, www.getold.com and www.gethealthystayhealthy.com. Whatever your situation, *Juggling Life, Work, and Caregiving* makes it clear: You are not alone. Pfizer and AARP care, and we want to help.