

# West Virginia Caregivers' Physical and Mental Health

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**AGE-ADAR  
SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

## West Virginian Caregivers's Tasks Affect their Physical and Mental Health

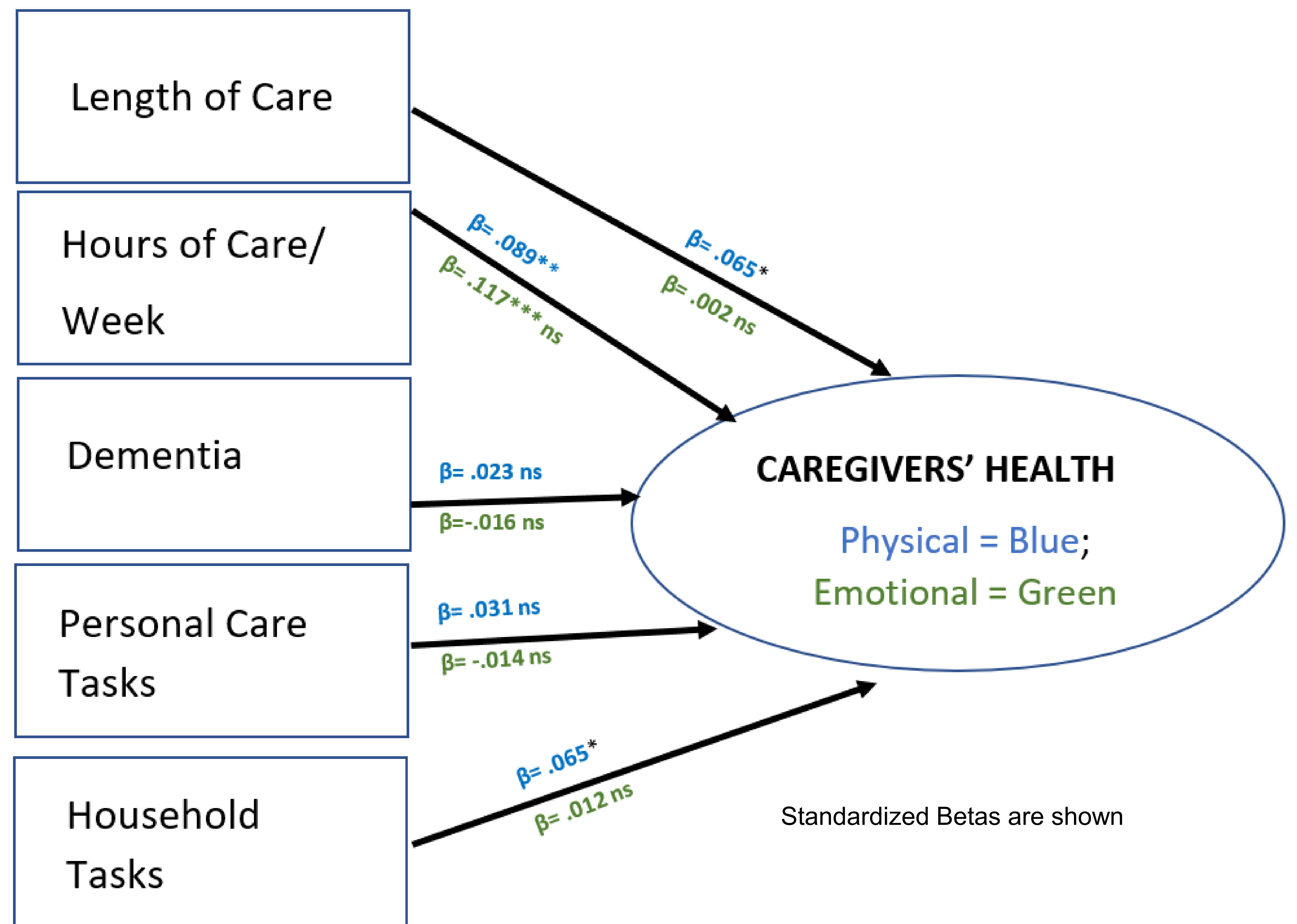
### Background

Family caregivers provide most of the assistance to children and adults who need help with daily living tasks. Decades of research show that caregivers often report poorer physical health compared to non-caregivers. Because place-based health disparities may also affect family caregivers, we examined the relation of caregiving tasks to health among WV residents.

### Methods

Data from 1353 West Virginian adults (M age = 56 years; 64.2% female) who completed the 2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) was used to test the relations among poor physical health days and the number of hours of care, length of care, household tasks, personal care tasks, and dementia diagnosis in the care-receiver.

### Regressions explaining Physical Health and Emotional Health



### Results

The physical health of WV caregivers statistically significantly  $F(5, 1079) = 3.37, p < 0.005, R^2 = 0.015$ . The significant results are that length of care ( $b = 0.065^*$ ); number of hours of care ( $b = 0.089^{**}$ ); and household tasks ( $b = 0.065^*$ ) uniquely contribute to the equation. While cognitive impairment disorders ( $b = 0.023$ ) and personal care tasks ( $b = 0.031$ ) did not meet those requirements.

The mental health of WV caregivers statistically significantly  $F(5, 1083) = 3.38, p < 0.005; R^2 = 0.015$ . The significant result is the number of hours of care ( $b = 0.117^{**}$ ) uniquely contributed to the equation. While the length of care ( $b = 0.002$ ), cognitive impairment disorders ( $b = -0.016$ ), personal care tasks ( $b = -0.014$ ), and managing household tasks ( $b = 0.012$ ) did not meet those requirements.

\* =  $p < 0.05$

\*\* =  $p < 0.01$

### Discussion

Most references show that caregivers have a higher effect on mental health than physical health. One study shows that the type of disability the care recipient has affects their overall health (Savage, 2004), while this poster shows that cognitive decline had no effect. It also shows that personal care tasks are harder than managing tasks while this data shows the opposite. More testing should be done to see why WV caregivers differ so much from the rest of the US.

### Conclusion

While the results for WV differ from the rest of the United States, it may need more testing with more variables to figure out why WV differs.

### References

CDC. (2021). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) (Version 2021). [https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/annual\\_data/annual\\_2021.html](https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/annual_data/annual_2021.html)

Savage, S., & Bailey, S. (2004). The impact of caring on caregivers' mental health: a review of the literature. *Australian Health Review*, 27(1), 111. <https://doi.org/10.1071/AH042710111>