



When you need a break

Delaware Lifespan Respite Care Network

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Look what Delaware's done so far!

In Fall 2003, The Center for Disabilities Studies at the University of Delaware (UD) published a report documenting the work of the Respite Care Task Force, "Respite Care in Delaware: A Critical Need for Change." Building on the momentum of the report, Easter Seals called together a group of interested stakeholders to form a coalition to continue discussion and work around the issue of respite care in Delaware. Known as the DE Caregivers Support Coalition, it first met in January 2004, and continued until it received foundation funding in 2009. The funding allowed part time staff to be hired and the group became an advisory committee to the funded project, the Delaware Lifespan Respite Care Network (DLRCN).

Since that time, Easter Seals has been the lead agency for the DLRCN, providing voucher funding for respite as well as resources and information. The program reaches caregivers across the lifespan and families can choose their own respite provider. The program continues to grow each year, and since July 2009 when the first vouchers were issued, DLRCN has provided nearly \$400,000 for respite vouchers to over 950 families who care for more than 850 loved ones at home.

For the past three years, the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) has provided funding for the program through a federal grant. With this support, in addition to the voucher funding, important caregiver activities have been accomplished. Some of the highlights include:

- Improvements to the ADRC database, Family SHADE database and the Guide to Services
- An annual Caregiver Conference sponsored in conjunction with Easter Seals
- Caregiver training and education sessions
- Caregiver 101 classes in libraries
- Unique joint Caregiver and Assistive Technology Resource Center
- Involvement of DSAAPD community ombudsman on respite voucher committee
- First Quality of Life workshop for DHSS employees about caregiving supports

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.....But there's still work to be done!

Although the accomplishments are significant, more resources and supports are needed for the thousands of family caregivers in Delaware. Some of the activities that are in the works include:

- Initiation of a parent co-op
- Merging caregiver issues with DSAAPD initiatives related to tele-health, TBI, housing and others
- Caregiver Task Force with report to the Governor
- State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias in progress; sub-groups are still meeting and caregiver issues are represented
- Research and start implementation of possible emergency respite options
- Embed respite and other caregiver supports into annual DSAAPD priorities
- Sustainability of key provisions of respite grant activities
- Revitalize and strengthen DLRCN with new members and new initiatives
- Additional training for ADRC and other call center staff about caregiver resources
- Targeted outreach to caregivers in specific settings
- Closer alliance with annual Alzheimer's Conference and other key conferences to include a possible caregiver track
- Additional improvements to DSAAPD and other websites including new links to caregiver information with additional focus on encompassing "lifespan" needs and issues
- Survey DHSS employees about awareness of their becoming a caregiver and need for caregiver information to support them....and the list goes on.

Today's summit is just the beginning. We need *your help* to develop a plan to continue the work that the "Delaware Caregivers Support Coalition" started more than a decade ago. Thank you for being here today!!