



Comments of ARCH and the National Respite Coalition on the *National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers*

Comments on State and Community Actions

Within this component of the strategy, what are the three most important topics/issues for the Advisory Councils to focus on moving forward?

The ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center’s mission is to assist and promote the development of quality respite and crisis care programs; to help families locate respite and crisis care services in their communities; and to serve as a strong voice for respite in all forums. ARCH is funded by ACL to provide training and technical assistance to Lifespan Respite grantees and their state respite coalition partners, and to the respite network, family caregivers and the public.

ARCH has identified 3 priority areas for Council consideration: 1) The Councils should continue to focus on the roles of states, communities and the private sector to help insure formal and informal respite care options for family caregivers. Respite is the cornerstone on which all other family caregiver supports depend. Use the Lifespan Respite Care Program as a model for coordinated, easily accessible, and affordable state services and supports, including respite for family caregivers; 2) Educate and involve the private insurance industry and employers in supporting family caregivers and those they care for; 3) Build service capacity by supporting service innovation at the local level; encouraging academic researchers to partner with local community based respite and caregiver support models to document meaningful, evidence-informed and culturally appropriate supports that are replicable; and building on state and community-based efforts to grow and strengthen the direct care workforce.

Are there issues that are not covered in this component that should be addressed in future updates?

ARCH recommends Councils consider these actions for states, local communities and others:

- 1) ***Use Lifespan Respite as State Model.*** The Lifespan Respite Care Program has demonstrated exceptional strategies for building partnerships and providing person and family-centered respite care that can serve as a model for states to meet the needs of family caregivers caring for anyone of any age or condition.

- 2) **Educate and Engage Private Insurance and Employers.** Private insurance plans, including those that participate in Medicaid Managed LTSS and Medicare Advantage, should be educated on respite cost savings resulting from improved caregiver health and well-being, and reduced hospital readmissions and facility placements. Incentives should be considered for **private insurers** to offer respite as a benefit. **Employers** should be encouraged to offer respite services and support to the more than 60% of family caregivers who are working. Lifespan Respite grantees do this by helping employers survey employees about caregiving needs or by offering respite and caregiver resources to employees. Business leaders and insurance industry representatives could be invited to participate in Council discussions. ACL should convene a roundtable of business and insurance industry leaders to explore providing respite and caregiver support.
- 3) **Grow the Respite and Direct Care Workforce.** The Councils should explore efforts to recruit and train new respite providers and volunteers through partnerships between lifespan respite grantees, state agencies and community colleges/universities.

If you have additional comments on any aspect of the Strategy, please provide them below.

The ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center applauds the National Strategy's approach to addressing the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of the report. We urge that future Councils continue to elevate the importance of cultural and linguistic competency in all modes of family caregiver service delivery and support, and that they recommend increased funding for additional and ongoing research to expand the knowledge base in this area.

Prepared by ARCH in November 2022 in response to a call from the Administration for Community Living for feedback on the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers. Responses will be used to help the RAISE Family Caregiving Advisory Council and the Advisory Council on Supporting Grandfamilies Raising Grandchildren identify priorities for future updates of the Strategy.