

Senior Services: Project C.A.R.E.

**Session Law 2010-31,
Section 10.35B**



Report to

The Governor's Advisory Council on Aging

and

The North Carolina Study Commission on Aging

and

The Fiscal Research Division

by

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

October 1, 2016

Project C.A.R.E 2015-16

Over five million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease and as many as 16 million will have the disease by 2050. According to the national Alzheimer's Association there are currently 437,000 caregivers in North Carolina providing care for loved-ones with Alzheimer's disease. By 2025, an estimated 210,000 North Carolinians age 65 and older are projected to have Alzheimer's disease.

Pursuant to Section 10.35B of Session Law 2010-31 (Senate Bill 897), the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services (Division) was directed to develop and implement a plan for use of \$200,000 in recurring funds to support Alzheimer's-related activities consistent with the goals of Project C.A.R.E (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empy). The session law called for this report to be submitted to the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging, the North Carolina Study Commission on Aging, and the Fiscal Research Division by October 1st annually.

Statewide Caregiver Support

Project C.A.R.E. expanded in the fall of 2013 from providing support in 36 counties to all 100 counties in the state. The Division recognized the importance of reaching individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their family caregivers as an essential step to meeting the long-term program objective of providing support for the significant increase in the number of caregivers of those with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The goal of Project C.A.R.E. is to provide supports for family caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in an effort to delay, and in some case avoid, more costly formal interventions, including placement in long-term care facilities.

Through existing state funds, Project C.A.R.E. established three (3) family consultant contractual positions. Each Family Consultant is affiliated with dementia-specific host agencies in the western, central and eastern areas of North Carolina who together cover all 100 counties. Each Family Consultant is linked to the 16 Area Agencies on Aging and their Family Caregiver Support Program through formal memoranda of agreement so that all available resources are well coordinated and leveraged for maximum effect. Through this partnership, caregivers are referred to available respite care in their county of residence (public funds for respite are currently quite limited).

Project C.A.R.E. family consultants provides support directly to caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias by:

1. Providing persons with dementia and their caregivers phone and face-to-face counseling, care consultation, dementia-specific information, caregiver assessments, caregiver education and connections to strong social support networks;
2. Partnering with each Area Agency on Aging (AAA) through its Family Caregiver Support Program to provide outreach, training and education;
3. Providing training and assistance to AAAs and the community-at-large to increase capacity to assist persons with dementia and their families;
4. Enhancing partnerships with and among the various entities serving persons with Alzheimer's disease and assisting their caregivers; and
5. Referring families for available respite care services available in their county of residence.

Description of Partnering Agencies

1. Land of Sky Regional Council Area Agency on Aging (Western Office): The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is a leader and catalyst in helping a four-county region (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania) develop a comprehensive system of programs and opportunities that provide older adults with the information and support needed to age optimally in the setting of their choice through coordination of home and community-based services, advocacy, outreach, training and education.
2. Duke Family Support (Central Office): Duke University's Aging Center Family Support Program established the first support groups in NC for families of adults with memory disorders in 1980 with Duke Hospital Auxiliary and NC Foundation grants. Currently those original organizations sponsor support groups of the Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's NC in almost all 100 counties. Staff members at Duke are recognized as national experts on issues related to the caring of loved ones with Alzheimer's and related dementias.
3. Alzheimer's North Carolina (Eastern Office): Since 1985, Alzheimer's NC, Inc. has provided family support, community education, public awareness, and support for research pertaining to the prevention, cure and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. This organization serves 51 counties with offices in Raleigh, Greenville and Wilmington. Alzheimer's NC has a strong working relationship with the Area Agencies on Aging and DAAS. (This program is subcontracted through Triangle J Council of Governments AAA)

Project C.A.R.E. Service Expansion

The NC General Assembly, in 2014, required the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services to develop the state's first strategic plan addressing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (Senate Bill 744 / S.L. 2014-100). The Division, in partnership with the NC Institute of Medicine, along with a 47 member task force, completed a plan in March 2016 entitled "Dementia Capable NC." The NC General Assembly responded favorably to the Project C.A.R.E. recommendations in this plan. The Governor and the General Assembly approved the appropriation of additional funds through Session Law 2016-94 (House Bill 1030). The Joint Conference Committee Report appropriated state funds in the amount of \$550,000 effective October 1, 2016 to support three (3) additional Project C.A.R.E. Family Consultants and to provide funding for respite care vouchers for family caregivers. The expansion of Project C.A.R.E will double the number of Family Consultants to work with families statewide allowing for more timely responses to the rapidly growing needs of unpaid caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. In addition, non-Medicaid eligible caregiver may receive up to three (3) \$500 respite care vouchers annually to provide in-home respite and/or respite in group settings, including Adult Day Care or Adult Day Health Care. Appropriated funds are estimated to provide approximately 550 respite care vouchers in state fiscal year 2016 and approximately 860 vouchers in state fiscal year 2017 and moving forward.