

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Families have always been, and continue to be, the primary source of help to those with long-term care needs. In fact, it is estimated that family and friends are the sole source of assistance for nearly 75 percent of our nation's impaired seniors.

Caregivers represent all gender, age, and ethnic groups. They are wives, husbands, daughters, sons, neighbors, and friends. They cook meals, wash clothes, administer medications, and provide companionship. Without them, many people with long-term care needs would either be in costly institutions or would live in isolation and at high risk.

Yet most family caregivers have little or no training and minimal support. They often have financial difficulties, lack information on care giving skills, and can experience feelings of isolation and depression. The Family Caregiver Support Program provides outreach and education to these caregivers by building upon our community's existing supports and services.

### ***RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH THE FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM***

**Caregiver Fact Sheets** provide practical information related to aging and eldercare.

**Caregiver Information Booklets** provide educational materials on a variety of topics, including Alzheimer's/dementia, stroke, depression, and self-care.

Alzheimer's and Dementia  
Care giving Tips  
Depression  
Taking care of the Caregiver

**Caregiver Kits** provide a collection of practical care giving information, as well as material to encourage you to take care of yourself, because we know caring for someone can be stressful. These kits are available in English, Russian, and Spanish.

**Caregiver Resource Libraries** are located throughout the region. Materials available for checkout include a comprehensive selection of books, videos, and periodicals. For information on library locations and materials, contact your local Family Caregiver Support Program.

### **Personal Caregiver Survey**

The first step in the caregiver screening and assessment process is filling out a Personal Caregiver Survey. The Personal Caregiver Survey asks you to reflect on your experiences and rate your response to a series of statements. Print it out and make arrangements with your caregiver specialist to discuss the results.

Family Caregiver Support Specialists and Caregiver Resource Coordinators in each county help caregivers find reference materials, coordinate services, and Provide follow-up support.

**Tribal Kinship Care** provides outreach and support to elder relatives raising children within Native American communities. The program assists elders with finding legal services and developing support groups.

**Caregiver Consultants** are available to provide in-home training and support, custom tailored to the needs of the individual caregiver and care recipient. Consultants include nurses, occupational therapists, nutritionists, and counselors throughout the region.

**Respite Care** provides a break for caregivers who need to be away for anywhere from a few hours to two weeks. Care is provided by qualified professionals, and may be provided in the home, in a nursing home facility, in an assisted living facility or through an adult day service program.

Training is available for interested caregivers. Training can be arranged for various needs, from Fundamentals of Caregiving to Alzheimer's Disease training.

**Powerful Tools for Caregivers** is a six session educational program for family caregivers that provides tools for increasing self-care, communicating with health care professionals, and for dealing with and finding solutions to difficult situations. Classes are provided in various locations throughout this region.

**Senior Information and Assistance** provides information on programs that assist older adults and their loved ones. Staff can also assist with applications and referrals. Information & Assistance services are provided on the phone, at their office, or in your home.