

**Testimony**  
**LONG – TERM CARE COMMITTEE**  
**North Dakota Family Caregiver Support Program**  
**Senator Dever, Chairman**  
**November 7, 2007**

Senator Dever and members of the Long-Term Care Committee, I am Judy Tschider, Program Administrator of the ND Family Caregiver Support Program at the Aging Services Division, Department of Human Services.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide information on the ND Family Caregiver Support Program.

The North Dakota Family Caregiver Support Program is a program that was implemented under the Older Americans Act. It is a program designed to offer support and services to individuals who are caring for someone in their home or in the community. The Program began providing services to ND caregivers in January of 2002.

Individuals who are eligible to receive services through the ND Family Caregiver Support Program are: 1) Unpaid caregivers who are caring for an adult 60 years of age or older, 2) Grandparents or other relative caregivers who are 55 years of age or older and are caring for a child 18 years of age or younger, and 3) Individuals who are caring for someone with Alzheimer's Disease or a related dementia, regardless of their age.

There is no income eligibility to receive services. All services are provided at no cost to the caregiver. The program does target certain population groups as per the Older American Act Standards, which are individuals who are lower income, socially isolated, and living in rural areas. The program cannot duplicate services if the individual is receiving state or county funded services or if the caregiver is being paid privately to provide care.

The ND Family Caregiver Support Program is administered through the eight regional human services centers. Caregiver Coordinators make home visits to meet with caregivers and complete a needs assessment.

The services provided through the ND Family Caregiver Support Program are:

- 1) Information is provided about services that are available in the caregiver's area including public education and assistance in accessing services.
- 2) Assistance from a Caregiver Coordinator to help caregivers assess their needs, establish an option plan and arrange for support services.
- 3) Individual or family counseling services are available to assist caregivers in decision making and problem solving related to their care giving roles. The Program will pay for four counseling sessions during an enrollment period.
- 4) Training services are available to assist caregivers in feeling more confident in providing care. The Program will pay for caregiver training sessions. Examples of how caregivers have used the training are: Having a physical therapist instruct a wife on how to transfer her husband from his wheelchair to the bed

without injuring each other; receiving instruction on how to follow a recipe for a man who has never had to cook a meal and now his wife is not able to work in the kitchen; or a speech therapist who made up a workbook for a son so he could communicate better with his mother who had suffered a stroke and had difficulty with her speech.

- 5) Supplemental services to assist caregivers with the cost of assistive devices or incontinence supplies.
- 6) Respite care for the temporary relief of a caregiver who is providing 24-hour care. The program has funding to pay for respite services to give caregivers a much-needed break. Respite services are chosen by the caregiver in the manner that best fit their needs. Family members, qualified services providers, licensed adult family foster care homes, adult day care programs, swing beds and nursing homes have all been used by caregivers as respite options.

An example of respite care services is of an 86 year old man who cared for his 80-year old wife who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Dementia. He was not able to leave his wife home alone and when he took her out with him, she would become very restless and agitated. He is a man who took up the sport of golf later in his life and found he loved it. He used his respite services to have a qualified service provider come and stay with his wife so he could continue his golf outings once a week. In the winter, he used his time for a bowling league. He was very dedicated to keeping his wife at home and the Caregiver Program supported him in being able to accomplish this goal.

I have attached a ND Family Caregiver Support Program brochure, which outlines the program services and has regional contact information to access services.

The first year the ND Family Caregiver Program began providing services to caregivers, 239 individuals received services. As of September 30, 2007, 1223 individuals have received services through the caregiver program. Follow up surveys with caregivers who have been in the program indicated program services helped them to keep their loved one home for a longer period of time.

Thank you for your time. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.