

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Sept. 9, 2019

Coalition working to increase support for caregivers of older adults and individuals with disabilities of all ages to meet in Fargo on Sept. 12

BISMARCK, N.D. – Individuals who have cared for loved ones with declining abilities or disabilities often are so focused on the needs of their loved ones, they neglect their own needs. AARP and the North Dakota Department of Human Services are co-hosting a coalition meeting in Fargo on Sept. 12, 2019, to focus on connecting more family caregivers to services and support.

“We know that older adults and people with disabilities want to remain living in their homes and communities,” said the department’s Aging Services Division Director Nancy Nikolas Maier. “By supporting families and especially caregivers, individuals receiving care are more likely to be able to delay or avoid moving into a nursing facility or other institution.”

In North Dakota, an estimated 64,400 informal caregivers help loved ones of all ages with chores, transportation, food preparation, bathing, medication and other care needs. Maier said individuals and caregivers are often unaware of available support services, including respite services, which offer a short-term break from caregiving responsibilities.

The Lifespan Respite Coalition is meeting from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Central Time, at Lutheran Social Services, 3911 20th Ave. S. in Fargo to review strategies addressing awareness and other barriers to access and usage of respite and related services.

Members will discuss the respite care conference report, the ideas shared at the state Lifespan Respite Summit in May 2019, emergency respite voucher service implementation, a grant update and more. The meeting agenda is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/publicnotice/index.html.

Interested individuals are welcome to attend the public meeting. Those unable to attend in person, can contact Mike Chaussee at mchaussee@aarp.org for information about participating via the audio and video conferencing tool Skype.

The coalition advises the department on implementation of the \$200,000 Lifespan Respite Care grant awarded to North Dakota in 2017 by the federal Administration for Community Living. The department administers the grant in partnership with the coalition and AARP.

Families seeking respite and other supportive services to care for family members can contact the Aging and Disability Resource Link at 855-462-5465, Relay ND TTY 800-366-6888 or www.carechoice.nd.gov for help finding services and resources.

Individuals with disabilities who need accommodations to participate in the meeting can contact Carmel Froemke in advance of the meeting at 701-271-3232 or 711 (TTY).

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