

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY OF FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

This memorandum provides information regarding actions that may be needed to address recommendations provided to the Legislative Management's interim Human Services Committee during the 2015-16 interim for the study of family caregiver supports and services.

The Legislative Management's interim Human Services Committee received recommendations from consultants presenting a report to the committee in May 2016 entitled *North Dakota Family Caregiver Supports and Services Study - Final Report*, and from testimony provided to the committee during the November 2015 and January 2016 meetings. The final report presented to the committee was prepared by the North Dakota State University Extension Service. The report identified resources, services, and supports for family caregivers, both public and private, and by region and county; identified barriers and challenges family caregivers experience, including the need for training, respite care services, medical leave policies, and delegation of tasks to family members and nonmedical aides; identified best practice models for family caregiver support programs from other states; and identified emerging practices and technology to enhance caregiver and patient home supports. The following schedules provide information regarding recommendations provided in the final report and from testimony presented to the committee during the 2015-16 interim, and a preliminary indication of whether statutory or administrative changes or additional funding may be required.

OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Description of Recommendation	May Require Statutory Changes	May Require Administrative Changes	May Require Additional State Funding
Develop a family caregiving taskforce that includes caregivers, service providers, and community leaders to develop recommendations to address service gaps, distance, population density of those needing service, culture, and other caregiving challenges; including a review of current, best, and emerging practices; and recommendations to close service gaps in selected areas; and to address unique concerns relating to rural caregiving		X	
Encourage marketing and outreach efforts to increase awareness of current programs and services available			X
Consider changes to eligibility criteria, or increase use of funding for individuals not currently financially eligible	X		X
Increase service availability, including respite care, care management, training and education, emotional support, volunteer programs, and various direct care supports, including adult day care, homemaker/chore, dementia care, and personal care			X
Increase resources to address caregiver well-being, including preventative, screening, and intervention care			X
Develop supports and guidelines to streamline the integration of state-sponsored services and specialized programs for veterans and Indian tribes		X	

IMPROVE AVENUES FOR SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS AND PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT THEM

Description of Recommendation	May Require Statutory Changes	May Require Administrative Changes	May Require Additional State Funding
Consider legislation that provides tax credits to employers in the private sector for providing a 12-week-paid family medical leave, including employees that take leave from work to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition	X		X
Expand the minimum requirements of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act to increase the number of individuals that may access benefits by adjusting eligibility requirements, expanding the range of family caregiving relationships, or increasing the amount of unpaid leave that may be taken	X		
Review budget reductions, including homemaker services			X
Consider reimbursement options for telemedicine and other technologies that have reduced repeated hospitalizations and allow long-distance caregivers to be included with health care visits		X	X
Consider adjusting the sliding fee scale for state-funded service payments for the elderly and disabled (SPED) programs that provide services to help older adults or physically disabled persons with difficulty completing tasks, so that they are able to live at home independently. In addition, consider adjustments that account for cost of living and inflation, and eases the financial burden of lower-income older adults.	X		X
Educate employers regarding the needs of family caregivers, including the importance of developing policies and strategies that support, retain, and reduce the burdens and stress of employees that are engaged in caregiving		X	
Develop a plan to expand long-term care insurance coverage across the state, including educating citizens of the benefits for long-term care insurance, expanding tax credits to individuals that purchase coverage and employers that provide a level of benefit toward the insurance, and providing state employees with a subsidized long-term care insurance plan	X		X

INCREASE ACCESS TO RESPITE CARE ACROSS THE STATE

Description of Recommendation	May Require Statutory Changes	May Require Administrative Changes	May Require Additional State Funding
<p>Review the feasibility of applying for federal grants from the Lifespan Respite Care Program to advance the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and enhance respite services in the states; • Improve coordination and dissemination of respite services; • Streamline access to programs; • Fill gaps in service where necessary; and • Improve the overall quality of the respite services currently available. 		X	
Expand the availability of respite care by training college students and other volunteers to allow relief for family caregivers			X
Evaluate best-practice training tools, including respite education and support tools for family caregivers. Evaluation should include identifying tools that are original and professionally designed to train individuals seeking to become a respite volunteer. In addition, the evaluation should include identifying tools that are appropriate for use within many settings, including schools, veterans' organizations, hospitals, senior centers, and faith communities.		X	
Promote awareness of the Family Caregiver Support Program to ensure it is fully utilized across the state			X
Create a directory of local respite care available to family caregivers. This directory should be easy to navigate and available online and in print. Moreover, it should be updated on a regular basis.			X
Assess the utilization of facility-based respite care to determine awareness and acceptance by family caregivers		X	

IMPROVE RESOURCES TO HELP FAMILY CAREGIVERS FIND, CONNECT TO, AND NAVIGATE AVAILABLE SERVICES

Description of Recommendation	May Require Statutory Changes	May Require Administrative Changes	May Require Additional State Funding
Identify marketing and communication strategies that will promote awareness and benefit the Aging and Disability Resource-LINK and the statewide options counseling system. Strategies should be developed to increase referrals and connect family caregivers with needed services.		X	
Develop a caregiver resource center website within the Aging and Disability Resource-LINK, or any appropriate organization, to increase access to existing programs and services for caregivers. The website may include relevant online resources, training, support, respite, and planning tools for family caregiver needs. In addition, the website may be a caregiver portal that hospitals, clinics, and other caregiver stakeholders promote.			X
Develop a comprehensive guide of caregiving for North Dakota caregivers similar to publications created in other states, including the United Way Caregivers Coalition's <i>Pathways for Caregivers</i> from United Way of Northern New Jersey			X
Explore current care coordination improvement efforts within the state to determine if there are ways to better support the needs of family caregivers that are assisting care recipients transition from hospital to home, rehabilitation, or hospice. In addition, encourage public and private care coordination to use evidence-based care coordination programs and that include caregiver assessments.		X	
Identify ways to increase communication, awareness of services, and collaboration between organizations, including health care, social services, and aging services; and including county and regional organizations, to identify local family caregiver resources, and increase referrals		X	
Provide public awareness to increase involvement with caregiving beyond the primary caregiver and to enhance greater understanding of family caregiving issues		X	

INCREASE TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR INFORMAL AND PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVERS

Description of Recommendation	May Require Statutory Changes	May Require Administrative Changes	May Require Additional State Funding
Provide in-person instruction for medical and nursing tasks that a caregiver will need to provide at home, including medication management, injections, and wound care and transfers. In addition, require instructions to be inclusive of both care recipients discharged from a facility and individuals that have not been discharged from a facility, but may need this type of instruction.	X		
Ensure training is available in-person and online to meet various family caregiver training needs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiving basics; • Managing care of others; • Financial caregiving; • Legal issues; • Medical and mental health support; • Communication; • Physical tasks of caregiving; • Caregiver self-care; and • End-of-life issues. 		X	X

Description of Recommendation	May Require Statutory Changes	May Require Administrative Changes	May Require Additional State Funding
Identify partnerships, including universities and health care systems, that may collaborate to develop and deliver family caregiver track training		X	
Increase the availability of the Powerful Tools for Caregivers Program statewide, and other evidence-based training programs that are effective			X
Ensure information, including schedules for a training program, are aggregated and accessible to family caregivers		X	
Develop opportunities for family caregiver peer supports, including a mentoring program with former caregivers, training events, and outings for both caregiver and care recipients		X	
Provide for the development of in-person and online support groups for caregivers of older family members		X	
Identify the feasibility of developing a professional training track for employees that deliver care. The training may include a small fee to help cover the costs of sustaining and updating a training program.		X	

CLOSING THE GAPS IN CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS

Description of Recommendation	May Require Statutory Changes	May Require Administrative Changes	May Require Additional State Funding
Support a statewide direct care workforce initiative to increase the number of individuals that are interested in caregiving professions, specifically in rural areas			X
Identify ways telehealth may address the needs of rural family caregivers and their care recipients, including plans for sustainable funding		X	X
Consider developing a pilot project for a mobile adult day care model in rural communities			X
Develop volunteer networks to support the needs of rural caregivers, including identification of available funding and administrative hosting that may be needed to recruit, orient, train, supervise, and coordinate the volunteers			X
Provide programs that help family caregivers organize caregiving tasks through platforms, including <i>Lots Helping Hands</i> , a social media website which allows caregivers to calendar a care recipients task needs and family/friends to sign up for performing specific tasks. <i>Share the Care</i> is a similar publication that can be adopted by caregivers and friends, health professionals, faith communities, and businesses.			X
When county social services are the only provider of a key service (such as respite or personal care), determine ways to provide assistance so that they can continue to provide services to eligible clients and to expand services, if possible, to private-pay clients		X	X
Provide funding for a pilot project that will include careful evaluation studies, including best practices for caregiver services targeting rural areas and may lead to effective and cost-efficient solutions			X
Provide funding for innovative technologies that allow older adults to live independently for longer periods of time, including developing technologies that support virtual caregiving from longer distances to allow seniors living in rural areas to communicate with a caregiver living in urban regions or out-of-state			X

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS PROVIDED TO THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE DURING THE 2015-16 INTERIM

Description of Recommendation	May Require Statutory Changes	May Require Administrative Changes	May Require Additional State Funding
Relating to aging and disability resource center services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communications for services available; • Ensure sufficient funding for the services; and • Provide the right services to the right people at the right time 		X X	X
Relating to the system of caregiving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create policy initiatives that allow individuals to care for an aging parent without leaving the workforce; • Create system changes within the health care and health and human services systems to promote coordination and focus in transition homes; and • Support an environment that allows for creativity to meet the demands for caregiving 	X	X X X	X
Review the benefits of assistive technology for family caregiver supports and services relating to the study for family caregiver supports and services			X
Relating to family support and health care discharge planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow a patient or legal guardian the ability to designate a caregiver when being admitted to the hospital; • Provide for a hospital to notify a family caregiver if a patient is being discharged or transferred to a different facility; and • Create a framework for a family caregiver to receive instructions for tasks the family caregiver will perform once a patient is discharged from the hospital 	X X X		
Provide assistance that will help a family or caregiver manage patient care and promote communication between medical professionals and caregivers relating to family support and health care discharge planning		X	X