



## Action Alert

### Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Inc.

#### Re-Open the Statewide Respite Program to New Participants!

Effective May 11, 2009, the Department of Social Services closed this critical program, which supports families caring for loved ones with dementia, to new participants. This has left over **300** family caregivers on a waitlist with nowhere to turn for help! The Governor's recent proposal to reduce total program funding by \$1 million will make it impossible to serve these and many other families.

**THE MESSAGE:** Please call or e-mail the key decision-makers who are listed on the next page to urge them to re-open the Statewide Respite Program to new participants.

#### WHY SHOULD LEGISLATORS SUPPORT THE ABOVE?

- **It saves money for the State of Connecticut!** This program was targeted to help middle-income families who have not traditionally qualified for state assistance with home care services. The assistance that is provided is a meaningful investment in making sure that these caregivers can continue to provide care at home, thereby deferring and in some cases preventing the need for state expenditure on nursing facility care.
- **It enables family caregivers to safeguard their own physical health and mental well being!** Respite care permits caregivers to take the time to visit the doctor, go shopping, maintain connections with friends and family, and rest and renew for the ongoing challenge of caring for loved ones with dementia.

**BACKGROUND:** The Connecticut Statewide Respite Program, which is operated through collaboration among the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Connecticut Alzheimer's Association chapters and the Connecticut Area Agencies on Aging, has proved that it is a vital and cost-effective source of support for caregivers of individuals afflicted with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia. Need for the program is well substantiated. Between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009, the program served over 924 clients with skilled care management intervention. This includes in-home assessment, assistance in identifying needed supports, and ongoing referral to other sources of assistance including the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders. During that period, 448 clients also benefited from payment for purchased services including adult day care, home health aide assistance, and companion/homemaker support, among others. Most utilized services included adult day care (used by 37% of clients), companion/homemaker (used by 43% of clients), and home health aide (used by 24% of clients).

## Contact information for the Governor's office and the Office of Policy and Management

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