



PRESS RELEASE



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Illinois Department on Aging recognizes National Caregiver Month *IDoA highlights ways to provide relief to family caregivers*

Springfield - As we come to the close of National Caregiver Month, the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) would like to highlight its Caregiver Support Program, and the resources available for people who are caring for older Illinoisans. IDoA would like to remind everyone to keep an eye out for friends and family who are caregivers and take a moment to support those who support others.

The Caregiver Support Program, managed by IDoA in partnership with the Area Agencies on Aging and local community-service providers, provide information to family caregivers about available services, individual counseling, support groups or caregiver training; assistance in gaining access to services; as well as supplemental services on a limited basis, to complement the care provided by family caregivers. All the resources are meant to provide respite care to a family caregiver.

"Caregivers are truly the superheroes. From managing medications, to getting to doctor appointments and balancing work and home; the fact is caregiving is complex, costly, stressful and demanding," says IDoA Director, Jean Bohnhoff. "This month is about recognizing, supporting, and celebrating caregivers. We want to highlight the resources available to this network of caregivers who have taken on what is the equivalent of a full-time job to care for their loved ones."

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 1 in 5 Illinois adults are caregivers. Of these caregivers, about 16% are 65 years of age or older themselves, and almost 1/3rd provide care for at least 20 hours per week. Support those who support others with these tips:

- **Checking in** - Isolation or feeling alone is a significant challenge when providing care for someone. A phone call to a caregiver just to check in, sending a note, or stopping by for a visit can make a significant difference and help them feel supported.
- **Everyone needs a break** - Volunteer to spend time with the person and allow the caregiver a chance to run errands, go to their own doctor's appointment, participate in a support group or engage in an activity that helps them recharge.

- **Holiday help** - Support caregivers around the holidays by offering to help with cooking, cleaning or gift shopping. If a caregiver has traditionally hosted family celebrations, offer your home instead.

The use of respite assistance is not a new concept; in Illinois and across the nation, the use of respite assistance has been a successful tool to engage the community and allow families time to take care of themselves so that they can continue to care for their loved ones.

For more information on the Caregiver Support Program, visit www.illinois.gov/aging, and click on the Caregiver Support Program tab.

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