



Arizona Caregiver Coalition

Collaboration - **A**dvocacy - **R**esources - **E**ducation

History and Purpose

Multiple Calls to Action – One Coalition

In the summer of 2006, the Social Health & Alzheimer's Committee of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging (GACA) initiated a Sub-Committee to examine the viability of coalition to support family caregivers. In October of 2006, President Bush signed the Lifespan Respite Care Act and early in 2007, Arizona passed similar legislation making Arizona only the fourth state in the country to have a state-funded Lifespan Respite Care Program (LRCP). Both the federal and state versions of the legislation included language mandating support for a statewide coalition to support respite care for family caregivers. When advocates of the Arizona Lifespan Respite bill approached the Arizona Department of Economic Security's Division of Aging and Adult Services (ADES-DAAS) about forming a respite coalition, it was decided to merge the GACA efforts to create a caregiver coalition with the need to create and develop a respite coalition, since both were in support of caregivers.

Respite Advisory Committee

ADES-DAAS convened a Respite Advisory Committee (RAC) in late 2007 to assist with the implementation of the LRCP, utilizing stakeholders from various agencies and organizations. This committee ordered a study to be done by the University of Arizona's Center on Aging located in Tucson, which was completed in early 2008. The RAC also made recommendations to initiate a public awareness campaign related to caregiving and respite care, and develop a caregiver assessment tool that could be used to better identify those caregivers in need of respite care.

Caregiver Rally on the Capitol Lawn

As the RAC was busy meeting and working on the LRCP, the GACA sub-committee was working hard to form the Arizona Caregiver Coalition. With the support of GACA and ADES-DAAS, along with sponsorships from stakeholders, a Caregiver Rally on the Capitol Lawn was held in March of 2008. The event was a rousing success and attracted approximately 400 caregivers from all walks of life and across Arizona to cheer and advocate for family caregivers.

Arizona Caregiver Coalition Launched

The Arizona Caregiver Coalition (ACC) was officially launched at a special Pre-Conference Intensive of the Governor's Conference on Aging held in Mesa in May of 2008. This meeting was attended by almost 200 stakeholders from around the state and these charter members of the ACC voted to approve the proposed vision and mission statements, along with the proposed membership structure and committee structure as recommended by the GACA Sub-Committee. (more on back)

Arizona Awarded Lifespan Respite Grant

Unfortunately, the fiscal crisis that started in 2008 impacted the LRCP and the ACC in ways that weren't anticipated. The funding for the state LRCP was cut substantially for SFY-2009, and eliminated completely for SFY-2010, and the overall environment of uncertainty impacted the startup activities of the coalition. In the spring of 2009, the Administration on Aging (AoA) in Washington released the first funding related to the federal lifespan respite legislation in the form of a competitive grant opportunity to states. Arizona applied and was awarded \$200K in September of 2009, effectively throwing a life-line to the fledgling LRCP in Arizona. The Arizona grant proposal included the recommendations of the original RAC to conduct a public awareness campaign in support of caregivers, including setup of a statewide resource line, and to develop and implement a caregiver assessment tool.

Memorandum of Understanding

In part to satisfy the requirements of both the state statute and the federal Lifespan Respite Care Act, ADES-DAAS has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Arizona Caregiver Coalition to help guide activities in support of family caregivers in Arizona. This MOU provides an important link between the ACC's activities and the overall goals of the Arizona Family Caregiver Support Program and will hopefully allow other stakeholders to understand the important role that the ACC has taken on. One of the primary reasons behind the urgency to establish an Advisory Board for the ACC is so the Board can elect a chairperson(s) to execute the MOU on behalf of the coalition. The approved draft of the MOU is included for review.

Coalition Matures Through Partnerships and Advisory Board

In January of 2011 the ACC initiated the Advisory Board to provide leadership and guidance. The Board will oversee the future development of the ACC, including establishing important partnerships that will allow the coalition to develop and begin to work towards its vision of an accessible network of support for family caregivers across Arizona. One of the first partnerships that will need to be considered is one with a fiscal entity that can provide the coalition with the ability to accept sponsorship funds for important upcoming events and to also upgrade websites and begin the process of developing a volunteer base to staff the proposed caregiver resource line.

Arizona Caregiver Coalition - Vision and Mission Statements

- The vision of the Arizona Caregiver Coalition is for all Arizona caregivers to have knowledge of and access to resources that support them.
- The mission of the Arizona Caregiver Coalition is to create awareness of caregiving issues and improve the quality of life for caregivers and care recipients through advocacy, information and education, support, and access to resources.

Because We Care!