



# Federal Policies to Address the Health and Well Being of Caregivers Across the Lifespan

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# Presentation Overview

- Existing Federal Policies Related to Caregiving
- Proposed Federal Caregiving Policy Initiatives
- Opportunities to Support Caregiving Policy Efforts

# Federal Caregiving Policy Overview

- Caregivers, advocates and experts have raised awareness regarding caregiving issues
- Policymakers are working to address growing caregiving needs at the local, state and federal level
- Developing and implementing comprehensive federal caregiving initiatives has been a slow and arduous process

# Categories of Caregiving Policy Initiatives

(Feinberg, 1997)

- Direct Services
- Consumer Direction/Cash & Counseling Model
- Employer-Based Mechanisms
- Financial Incentives and Compensation



# Existing Federal Caregiving Policies

# Family and Medical Leave Act

(P.L. 103-3)

- Signed into law in 1993
- Allows 12 weeks of unpaid leave annually for full-time employees to care for a family member with an illness or new child
- Does not provide coverage for all workers or employment sites



# National Family Caregiver Support Program

(P.L. 106-501)

- Created in 2000 (Older Americans Act Reauthorization)
- Administered by the Administration on Aging (AoA)
- Allowable services include:
  - Information about available services
  - Assistance in gaining access to supportive services
  - Individual counseling, support groups and training
  - Respite care
- Eligible Populations:
  - Family caregivers of older adults
  - Grandparents/relative caregivers of children

# Lifespan Respite Care Act

(P.L. 109-442)

*Sponsored by Senators Clinton and Warner and Reps Ferguson and Langevin*

Signed into law in December 2006, authorized:

- lifespan respite programs at the state and local levels
- planned and emergency respite for family caregivers
- training/recruitment of respite workers and volunteers
- provision of information to caregivers about respite/support services
- assistance for caregivers in gaining access to such services
- establishment of a National Resource Center on Lifespan Respite Care

\$2 million has been proposed for this initiative in the FY08 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill



# Cash & Counseling

[www.cashandcounseling.org](http://www.cashandcounseling.org)

- Demonstration project established in 1998 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Gives older adults and individuals with disabilities who receive personal assistance services through Medicaid the option of directing their own care by redirecting personal assistance funds from agencies to consumers
- Currently, demonstrations exist in Arkansas, Florida, New Jersey, Alabama, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia
- Benefits for family caregivers (Foster, Brown, Phillips, & Carlson, 2005):
  - lower levels of physical, emotional, and financial strain
  - improved feelings of satisfaction with life
  - increased privacy and free time
  - increased feelings of satisfaction with care recipients care arrangements
  - increased ability to pursue desired employment and getting to work on time
  - increased ability to get along with care recipient

## 2005 White House Conference on Aging Resolutions Related to Caregiving

- Develop a National Strategy for Supporting Informal Caregivers of Seniors to Enable Adequate Quality and Supply of Services
- Support Older Adult Caregivers Raising Their Relatives' Children

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# Proposed Federal Caregiving Policy Initiatives

# Kinship Caregiver Support Act

(S. 661/H.R. 2188)

*Sponsored by Senators Clinton, Snowe, Cochran and Reps Davis and Johnson*

- Authorizes grants for kinship navigator programs to state agencies with experience in addressing needs of kinship caregivers or children and connecting them with services and assistance
- Authorizes states to provide kinship guardianship assistance payments on behalf of children to grandparents and other relatives
- Authorizes kinship guardianship demonstration projects
- Requires states to:
  - notify grandparents/relatives when a child is removed from parental custody
  - explain options to participate in the child's care and placement

# Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act

(S. 1758/H.R. 3001)

*Sponsored by Senators Kennedy, Harkin and Dodd and Reps Pallone  
and Dingell*

- Designed to help adults with severe functional impairments obtain the services and supports they need to stay functional and independent
- Creates a nationwide public insurance program financed through payroll deductions to help pay for long-term services and supports



# Americans Giving Care to Elders (AGE) Act

(S. 2267)

*Sponsored by Senators Klobuchar and Mikulski*

- Provides an income tax credit for eldercare expenses (up to \$1,200 each year)
- Extends and increases funding for the National Family Caregiver Support Program
- Establishes the National Resource Center on Family Caregiving to:
  - identify, develop, and disseminate information on best practices for and evidence-based models of family caregiver support programs
  - provide timely information on policy and program updates relating to family caregivers
  - partner with related organizations to disseminate practical strategies and tools to support families in their caregiving roles
  - convene educational programs and web-based seminars on family caregiver issues and program development
  - provide a comprehensive Internet website with a national searchable database on family caregiver programs and resources in the States



# The Future of Caregiving Policy

- Insufficient resources currently exist to manage the growing caregiving needs in our country
- Continue support for existing programs (e.g., NFCSP)
- Continue support for pending federal legislative initiatives
- Need for continued advocacy driven by research, clinical knowledge and individual needs and preferences

# How the Public Health Community Can Enhance Caregiving Policy

- Share research and clinical expertise with policy makers (e.g., professional organizations, University liaisons, directly)
- Attend an advocacy workshop and lobby day
- Visit with policy makers in Washington or in the state/district
- Join a public policy/advocacy action network
- Respond to organizational action alerts (e.g., e-mail, telephone, fax)
- Testify or present at congressional hearings and briefings
- Consider a policy fellowship in Washington, DC



**For Further Information:**

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