VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 25, 2013

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DARS ANNOUNCES TEMPORARY VOUCHER PROGRAM FOR CAREGIVER RESPITE

Caregivers can apply for up to $400 reimbursement

(RICHMOND, Va.) — Virginia families who care for a loved one with disabilities or chronic conditions can apply for up to $400 reimbursement for respite care under a new, limited voucher program from the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

Beginning Jan. 29, caregivers may apply to the Lifespan Respite Voucher Program. Those who qualify and are approved may receive up to $400 reimbursement for costs related to respite. The program will distribute vouchers for reimbursement from a federal grant limited to $179,079, which closes by July 31.

On Jan. 29, DARS Commissioner Jim Rothrock will join Jill Kagan, program director with ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center, caregivers and representatives from family support organizations and service organizations to describe the grant-funded voucher program and explain the significance of respite for caregivers. Respite is short-term, temporary relief for those who care for family members, which can help reduce the strain on caregivers so they can continue to provide for their loved ones.

"Everyone at some point is a caregiver or care recipient," said Rothrock. "Those who are responsible for caring for someone, whether young or old, are important in that person's life. Respite can help provide support so you can continue to care for your loved one as well as for yourself and others in your family."

An estimated 447 families could be helped by the voucher program, part of the Commonwealth's efforts to support a statewide network of coordinated caregiver respite services. DARS collaborates on the efforts with the Virginia Caregiver Coalition, which works to improve the experience of care giving through education, advocacy and access to resources.

"Respite care can be for different periods of time, from a few hours to days or weeks. It can be planned or urgent and may be provided in a variety of settings, including home, adult day

care centers or residential care facilities," said Mary Ann Johnson, chair of the Virginia Caregivers' Coalition. "We hope the kickoff event for this voucher program will help Virginians learn about the importance of respite for themselves and for those for whom they provide essential care."

Johnson and Katie Benghauser, director of community outreach and training for VirginiaNavigator, will also speak at the Jan. 29 event.

Respite could be the help a father with Alzheimer's receives from someone at church who stays with him for a few hours once a week so that his caregiver, his adult daughter, can attend to her family and her health. It could also be the respite a couple whose young son has cerebral palsy receives when the child attends a week-long overnight summer camp.

Examples of respite services for which families can apply for reimbursement include:

- An in-home program, where services are provided in the family's home or a care provider's home

- A center-based program, where family caregivers bring the care recipient (e.g., child, adult, aging individual) to a facility to receive respite care

- A child or adult care center, a summer or weekend camp, or family day care home or adult family home which provides temporary care in addition to regular child or adult care services

- Assisted living or nursing home respite programs

For more information on how to apply, visit DARS at www.vadars.org or VirginiaNavigator at www.virginianavigator.org for application forms as well as information on respite care and related services available in the Commonwealth.

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The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services provides and advocates for the highest quality of services to help older Virginians and those with disabilities maximize and secure their employment, independence, and full inclusion into society. For more information, visit www.vadars.org or www.facebook.com/vadars.