

Appendix B

May 16, 2009

Dear Caregivers,

The Administration on Aging has awarded a grant to the State of Connecticut to offer more flexible service options for caregivers. The state has chosen the Agency on Aging of South Central CT to pilot the new options. The new grant called "Choices At Home" will use existing program funding available to caregivers through the Connecticut Statewide Respite Care Program and the National Family Caregiver Support Program.

The new grant seeks to offer an additional resource for caregivers through a "cash and counseling" option. The "cash and counseling" option offers caregivers the ability to pay someone directly to provide care for their family member instead of paying an agency. For those caregivers who choose this option there will be assistance with employment and tax forms from a "fiscal" agency. An additional option expands upon the existing purchase of health related items for caregivers and allows for a larger budget to pay for more expensive one-time only purchases (such as ramps and stair-glides). The intent of the new grant is to keep people out of nursing homes by providing increased options for service and more dollars for home modifications.

What are the new options?

Caregivers who receive "personal assistance" services for a family member will have the option of directing that care. You will become the employer and will hire whomever you want (family, friends or other associates) to provide the care. Currently, traditional services provided through an agency, include help with everyday needs like bathing, dressing, grooming, cooking, and housekeeping. The new program will enable you to hire an individual of your choice to provide all these services. Choices at Home offers consumers and caregivers more flexibility and control in managing their daily lives.

- **You decide who provides the care**
- **You decide when the care is needed**
- **You decide what kind of help will be needed**

How will this work?

The Caregiver: Your role as Caregiver is to make decisions about the best way to meet your needs, receive and use services and judge how well they worked for you and make changes as needed. As a Caregiver, you have choices about what to buy with your budget, where you buy, and from whom you buy.

The Fiscal Intermediary/Agent: This agent will hold your budget funds (like a bank). They will create payroll checks (like a payroll company). They will deduct your payroll from your budget, complete and file the tax forms with the federal and state governments and pay the employer taxes for you (like an accountant).

What will my care manager do?

Your care manager, during a home visit, will conduct a re-assessment of the care needs of your family member and discuss the new options with you. You may choose to stay with your current service provider or choose the new option to hire a “personal assistant” of your choice. You may also elect to have a care plan that combines both options. For example, you may want to continue with adult day care but hire a “personal assistant” rather than the companion or homemaker you have through an agency. Your care manager will continue to be available for information, guidance and problem solving.

How much care will be available?

Any respite care plan is subject to a limit of up to \$3500 per year. Your care plan cap was based on the amount of care your family member needs, the private resources available to him/her and, the availability of program funding. Any care plan using the new options will be subject to the same criteria. For example, if your care plan cap was \$2800 under the traditional service delivery system, your cap will remain at \$2800 but you can use that budgeted amount to develop your care plan and hire your own “personal assistant”.

Will there be a co-payment for services?

Yes, if you are currently required to make a co-payment for traditional services, you will have the same requirement if you choose the “cash and counseling” option.

What type of health-related items are available?

The new program can offer up to \$4000 to build a ramp, add a stair glide or modify a bathroom to accommodate the needs of your family member. These funds can also

cover the non-Medicare portion of assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, commodes, and any other health-related item.

Who is eligible?

As a caregiver receiving service through either the National Family Caregiver Support Program or the CT Statewide Respite Program, you will be offered these options before the general public, as this program is a new pilot. Therefore, please indicate below (you may check more than one) if:

___1) You wish to replace your current companion, homemaker, home health aide or adult day care provider with service from a family member or friend.

Please note: (A spouse cannot be paid to care for a spouse).

___2) You wish to modify your home to better accommodate the needs of your family member.

___3) You are content with your current services and do not wish to change your care plan.

___4) You would be interested in the "cash and counseling" option but have no family or friends available to hire.

Name of Caregiver: _____

Name of family member: _____

Please return this page in the enclosed, addressed, stamped envelope by May 23, 2008. These new options will be available on or before July 1, 2008 through March 31, 2009.

We hope to hear from you soon, please call with any questions.

Sincerely,

Respite Staff

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