

## **Dementia Care Specialist Program** ***A Wise Investment: Crucial to Containing Costs***

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***Ensure critical programs and services are consistently available by adding Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) funding to the base allocation of Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) and expanding DCS services statewide.***

**Dementia is life-changing and expensive** - Every 66 seconds someone in the U.S. develops Alzheimer's disease. It not only changes their life and the lives of those around them, but substantially ***adds to the cost of health and long-term care, especially public funding.*** This trend is not slowing down anytime soon.

**Dementia in Wisconsin is on the rise** - In Wisconsin we estimate 115,000 individuals 65 and older are living with some form of clinically-diagnosable dementia. By 2040 the population is expected to grow to 240,000; this does not account for the estimated 5% of individuals younger than 65. The care and treatment of persons with dementia is now being described as ***a public health emergency.***

**Dementia Care Specialists save taxpayers money** - DCSs housed within ADRCs help persons with dementia stay in their communities. They provide specialized education to ADRC staff, providers and families, in-home consultation, volunteer development, and community coalition building. The purpose of the program is to positively impact the lives of the individuals and families living with dementia as well as improve the sustainability of our long-term care system by reducing or eliminating their need for public funding. ***Each day an individual remains in the community outside expensive institutional care saves taxpayers \$161 per day or \$58,925 annually*** (Elder Benefit Specialist fiscal impact calculation). The DCS program is a wise and sound investment of public dollars.

### **Wisconsin Communities and Citizens Benefit From an Investment in Dementia Care Specialists**

Statewide financial investment in Dementia Care Specialists has been low cost, with tremendous reach into local communities. Statewide, the total investment has been \$1,520,000 GPR covering approximately 54% of the state's older adult population\*. ADRCs and tribes awarded a DCS grant received \$80,000/year for costs related to these highly-valued positions. Funding for the DCS positions (16 county/regional ADRC and 3 tribal) is scheduled to end December 31, 2017. The current 2017-2019 state budget does not fund the current positions beyond this date. We ask consideration for cost to continue the valuable services currently funded and propose expansion of the services statewide. Each position draws down additional critical federal dollars with their activities. The additional federal revenue generated contributes to other important ADRC services. Statewide, it is estimated over \$800,000 in federal funding is received annually and invested in services in local communities.

#### **Budget Request:**

- ***Budget Year 2018 - January 1, 2018 - June 30, 2018: \$760,000*** - Cost to continue existing DCS services (covering 54% of the state's older adult population\*).
- ***Budget Year 2019 - July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019: \$2,560,000*** - Cost to continue plus expansion of DCS services **statewide.**
- ***TOTAL Request for 2017-2019 Biennial Budget: \$3,320,000*** (Does not include any funding needed for state program administration.)

*\*Percentage based upon the state population of individuals age 60 or older.*

## ADRCs Can't Continue DCS Programs Without This Funding

**ADRCs are already struggling to keep up** with the volume. In Wisconsin, there has been a steady increase in the workload. The 2014 Wisconsin ADRC status report states an ADRC is contacted every 13 seconds for information, guidance, and support. Since the Dementia Care Specialist program began in 2014, it has seen 60% growth in customers served, 43% increase in memory screens administered, 118% increase in referrals provided, and 136% in outreach activities and educational events.

Dementia Care Specialists are highly-trained professionals who have the time to stay current on new treatments and clinical trials that are occurring around dementia diagnosis and treatments.

Dementia Care Specialists provide:

- Valuable case consultation, including crisis planning and prevention. DCS spend time educating individuals and families about the disease and discuss person-centered plans to improve outcomes related to changes in communication, behavior, and symptoms. All of these activities lie beyond the scope and resources of other ADRC staff's roles.
- Expertise that is shared widely. The momentum to create a Dementia Friendly Wisconsin will be stalled if concentrated outreach, training, and facilitation of community projects discontinue without the DCS position. These efforts can't be absorbed. Dementia Friendly Wisconsin activities include:
  - Training for law enforcement, fire and rescue, and hospitals so they are prepared to meet the needs of the people they serve.
  - Leadership in the dementia friendly community initiatives that include businesses, employers, and other local organizations to help raise awareness of the unique needs of people with dementia and their families. Without this dedicated position, the ADRC would not be able to continue to lead the coalition initiatives. It has been demonstrated that a dedicated position leading a local community initiative greatly improves success.
  - In person, interactive education. It has been the ADRCs experience that individuals respond well to in person, interactive education where an experienced, skilled professional is present to answer questions.
- Support for the professional development of other ADRC staff.
  - Assure staff is trained in consistent, reliable memory screening including the cognition portion of the long-term care functional screen.
  - Assure fidelity, reliability, and consistency of memory screen completion.
- Connections to strong partnerships with the Alzheimer's Association. They assure ADRCs collaborate, not duplicate, services that are in high demand. Dementia Care Specialists are present in the local communities, are able to meet 1:1 in persons' homes, and respond to referrals from the Alzheimer's Association in local communities. ADRCs are the only community resource that provide memory screening.
- Opportunities for individuals and family caregivers to participate in evidence-based interventions.
  - **The Memory Care Connections** program provides family caregivers with tools to be successful in providing care for their loved ones. The program has been shown to help families care for loved ones at home an average of 18 months longer than without the support of the program.
  - **The LEEPS (Language-Enriched Exercise Plus Socialization)** program provides opportunities for people in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or mild dementia to engage in exercise and social opportunities. LEEPS has been shown to help individuals with dementia improve their physical fitness and mood as well as maintain functional ability.

**Dementia  
Care  
Specialists**

Serving Individuals,  
Families and the  
Community

