

Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2003

Issue

The Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2003, H.R. 1083 and S.538, directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants or cooperative agreements to develop statewide lifespan respite care programs. The Senate-passed version, S.538, was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. It would authorize \$90 million in competitive grants for community-based respite care services for caregivers of individuals with special needs of all ages.

AHCA Proposal

The American Health Care Association (AHCA) and the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) support and endorse the Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2003 and urges the House Committee on Energy and Commerce to discharge the bill quickly for House floor consideration.

Background

“Lifespan respite care” is defined to mean a coordinated system of accessible community-based respite care services for family caregivers. Funds may be used for respite care services and training programs. The proposed legislation also provides for the establishment of a National Resource Center on Lifespan Respite Care to maintain a national database and provide training, technical assistance, and information.

Respite care for caregivers of individuals with special needs of all ages is valued at about \$250 billion annually. Respite care has been shown to help alleviate the stress associated with caregiving and minimize or delay the need for out-of-home placements. This legislation would allow states to coordinate existing crisis and non-crisis respite care services, start new respite care programs, provide training and technical assistance to families and respite care providers, and build overall local capacity to provide respite care services. Over 150 national, state and local organizations have endorsed the Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2003. Senate approval for S. 538 was unanimous.

Status

AHCA and NCAL are active participants in the National Respite Coalition and fully support *The Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2003*. We urge its passage in the House.

Action

Continue to support passage of *The Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2003* by communicating directly with members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and by working with the National Respite Coalition.