



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

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Michael F. Easley, Governor

Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

June 4, 2003

Announcement

To: Local Officials, Advocates, Providers, Planning Groups, and Others

From: Lynda McDaniel, DHHS Assistant Secretary for Long Term Care and Family Services 

Subject: *A Communications and Coordination Initiative to Strengthen LTC Services*

I am pleased to announce an opportunity to participate in an initiative designed to strengthen local services to meet the long-term care (LTC) needs of older and disabled adults and their families. This initiative represents a unique local and state partnership that will have our Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) assisting two pilot counties and/or multi-county areas in evaluating core LTC services and identifying actions to develop an improved system of care and services.

The project's name—*A Communications and Coordination Initiative to Strengthen LTC Services*—captures its basic objectives. All DHHS Divisions with LTC responsibilities will provide significant assistance and guidance to help two local planning teams pilot a year-long process that other communities can use in the future. The initiative should improve the exchange of information and ideas between local and state interests to help address barriers to the effective delivery of LTC services. It should also help strengthen consumer participation in local LTC planning and foster innovative approaches to meeting local LTC needs.

The DHHS LTC Cabinet, which includes the directors of all DHHS divisions with responsibility for LTC, will select the two volunteer communities through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Volunteer communities must agree to follow two basic components of local LTC planning as recommended by the NC Institute of Medicine in its 2001 Plan (see <http://www.nciom.org/pubs/long-term.html> for details on the 2001 Plan): (1) consider the needs of older and younger disabled adults; and (2) assure representation by the many and varied LTC interests (e.g., institutional and home care, consumer and provider). The two pilot communities will have one year to organize a local team to evaluate the community's core LTC services and develop a strategic action plan based on the local evaluation. A special State Team appointed by the LTC Cabinet will facilitate the work of these two communities by offering evaluation tools, training and technical assistance, access to data, and possible participation in other related LTC projects. At the LTC Cabinet's request, the Division of Aging is coordinating the State Team.

The local planning teams will have *great flexibility* in designing a planning process to meet their community's needs. It is hoped that this activity will help coordinate local planning efforts that are already taking place within communities, thus reducing duplication, increasing efficiency, and promoting cooperation and communication among state and local interests—all toward developing a consumer-centered system of high-quality, cost-effective care with highly visible entry points that offers persons a choice of LTC services that best meet their needs in the least restrictive setting possible. It is also hoped that these communities will become future settings for testing innovative approaches for helping North Carolina realize this goal.

Included with this announcement are the following materials: [All of this material is available on the DHHS web site at www.dhhs.state.nc.us/ltc/]

- A four-page summary of the initiative.
- The RFP that includes the community's statement of interest and the lead agent(s) statement of commitment. Note that applicant communities must designate a lead agent or lead agents to facilitate the local work and must have strong support from their County Commissioners. **Proposals are due by July, 23, 2003.**

For more information please contact Steve Freedman, Service Operations Section Chief, at the NC Division of Aging. He can be reached at 919-733-0440 or Steve.Freedman@ncmail.net.

