
MODELS FOR PRACTICE

FOCUS AREA: ACCESS TO LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES

Program Name: Georgia Mobile Day Care Program

Location: Atlanta, Georgia

Problem Addressed: Access to Long-Term Care Services

Healthy People 2010 Objective: 1

Web Address: www.aging.dhr.georgia.gov

SNAPSHOT

Family and friends often serve as the primary care providers for those with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders; however, much needed social day care and respite services are often nonexistent in rural areas. The Georgia Mobile Day Care Program is an innovative program that addresses this gap in services by providing adult social day care to rural communities by sharing staff, who travel between locations.

THE MODEL

Blueprint: The Georgia Mobile Day Care Program provides adult social day care and respite services to rural Georgia through two programs—the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board Reflections Program that provides services to Upson and Butts Counties, and the Athens Community Council on Aging that provides services to Elberton, Greene, Morgan, and Newton Counties. Program staff travel up to 50 miles one way each day to the program site—generally a senior center in the community. Program staffing varies but typically includes a registered nurse who provides overall supervision to the program and rotates visits among the various sites, an activity director and an aide, and community volunteers. With a staff to client ratio of 1:4, most sites maintain a capacity of up to eight clients per site.

The program provides a range of services for clients. On a typical day, clients participate in exercises, cognitive activities, movies, crafts, and reminiscing. Lunch and snacks are provided at each site. At some sites, transportation is available for a nominal fee. One-on-one time is set aside at the start and end of each day to allow caregivers and the staff to discuss concerns regarding the client.

Making a Difference: Clients, caregivers, and rural communities have benefited from the Georgia Mobile Day Care Program. Caregivers have identified key areas of satisfaction including the ability to keep the loved one in the home and delay nursing home placement, respite care for the caregiver, and reduction in the burden on the caregiver. The average length of stay in the program is 21 months, although some clients have participated

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for more than six years. Through written surveys, 100 percent of caregivers indicate that the program provides them with relief and peace of mind.

The program has continued to grow since its inception. The original program site in Augusta has expanded to provide services five days per week and is now a stand-alone facility. Some sites that were initially just one day per week have increased service to two or three days per week. Program organizers continue to seek additional funding to allow expansion of the program to other underserved areas of Georgia. The ability of the program to be replicated in rural and urban areas has generated attention from not only other counties in Georgia but also other states. To date, over 25 states have requested information about the program.

The program is publicized through a variety of avenues to target caregivers, providers, communities, referral sources, and potential funders. These communication channels include radio, newspaper, health fairs, presentations at professional conferences and workshops, and feature articles in periodicals. In September 2004, Georgia Mobile Day Care released a new video highlighting the program. This video can be viewed on the Division's website; upon request, copies will be mailed to interested persons or organizations.

Beginnings: Initial funding was obtained by the Georgia Division of Aging Services through an Alzheimer's Demonstration Grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging. The first site was established in McDuffie County in 1996, providing care one day per week. Today, the site has matured into a stand-alone program—The Homeplace, a facility that provides care five days per week. Two additional programs in two Area Agencies on Aging have subsequently been developed—the Reflections Geriatric Program and the Athens Community Council on Aging. These programs serve six counties. The program is currently funded through sliding fee schedules, United Way funds, state funds, and some private-pay clients.

Challenges and Solutions: The program has encountered a number of challenges in providing this service to rural Georgia. Foremost among these challenges is gaining the community's trust and buy-in. To meet this challenge, the program fosters community involvement through establishment of local advisory boards, hiring local individuals to work in the program, enlisting local volunteers, and selecting well-known locations in the community (such as the senior center or church) to serve as the service sites. Lack of resources is a key concern for rural areas with limited funding to establish their own "bricks and mortar" respite services. By sharing staff between sites, utilizing existing facilities in the communities, and capitalizing on available resources, rural areas are able to overcome many resource barriers to provide social day care for clients with Alzheimer's and/or other chronic conditions, and respite care for their families.

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PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

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