Support HB16-1398 - Respite Care Task Force Recommendations

Title: CONCERNING THE RESPITE CARE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE FUNDING NEEDED FOR IMPLEMENTATION


Background:

- There are more than 843,000 family caregivers in Colorado. Respite care, a break from the daily responsibilities that constant caregiving requires, is a necessary service for families. Respite care reduces stress, improves overall health and wellbeing, strengthens families and helps prevent abuse and neglect.
- HB15-1233 created the statewide Respite Care Task Force to study the supply and demand with regard to respite care services in Colorado. The Respite Care Task Force consisted of professionals and family caregivers, representing the lifespan and disability spectrum, living throughout Colorado.
- The Respite Care Task Force submitted its recommendations to the legislature in January 2016.

What the Bill Does:

- HB16-1398 requires the Colorado Department of Human Services to select and contract with an entity to implement the recommendations of the Respite Care Task Force.
- The recommendations that would be implemented include: conducting a cost-benefit analysis of respite care; increasing training opportunities for professionals and family caregivers; conducting a statewide outreach campaign to educate Coloradans about the importance of respite care and how to access it; and collaborating with state departments to streamline respite care regulations thereby, increasing service accessibility.

Reasons to Support:

- The result of a study may show the cost of respite to Colorado. In 2011, AARP estimated Colorado’s family caregivers provide 551 million hours of unpaid care annually, valued at $6.6 billion. Colorado has one of the fastest growing aging populations, therefore providing support to older adults in their efforts to age in place through the Respite Care Task Force recommendations reduces costs to the State.
- Respite care is not traditional babysitting. Caregivers need appropriate training to care for individuals with special health care needs. Currently, training options for respite care providers in Colorado are very limited.
- The creation of an outreach campaign will allow professionals and family caregivers to find information on where to find respite care, how to access it, and what it will cover.
- Streamlining the state regulations will allow for funding and services to be directed towards those who need respite care and reduce the burden of unnecessary compliance.
- HB16-1398 will address the many barriers families face when trying to access services, and strengthen Colorado’s families and the caregiver resource network that supports these families.
Explanation of Respite Care Task Force Recommendations (HB16-1398)

Cost-Benefit Analysis of Respite Care

- Families know how important respite care is, and so do many professionals. However, there is very limited data on respite nationally, and even less that is Colorado specific. We hope that a comprehensive study will show policymakers that respite is cost-effective for the state and that by supporting respite services, there will be a reduction in out of home placements, hospitalizations and improved quality of life for families facing the challenges of caregiving.

Long Term Goal: Increased understanding of respite care needs and allocation of funds for services in Colorado

Training Initiative

- We so often hear from families that they are not able to find a quality respite provider that is able to take care of their loved one. By developing an inventory of all trainings for professional providers, informal providers and family caregivers, we will help address these challenges. In many parts of Colorado there is only one or two agencies providing care, and that may be for a specific age group or condition. We also often hear from providers that they must be retrained when they switch agencies, and we hope to standardize training programs to remove duplication of efforts and allow providers to serve more families with their time. We need to work to grow the provider workforce in Colorado, and this is the first step in bringing consistent, high quality training programs to our state.

Long Term Goal: Adequate number of highly trained respite care providers statewide

Statewide Outreach Campaign

- We know there are more than 843,000 family caregivers in Colorado, but only a small percentage of them know respite care may be available or how to access it. A statewide outreach campaign is a crucial step in helping to show the many faces of caregivers across Colorado and showcasing a centralized hub of respite care and caregiver resources. We all know to go to the ER when we have a broken bone. Family caregivers need to know where to go when they need support, and this campaign will be a stepping stone to getting us there.

Long Term Goal: Increased awareness of caregiver needs and how to locate services

Respite Systems Standardization

- Families and professionals understand how difficult it is to navigate the respite care system in Colorado. By working collaboratively with state agencies we will aim to create more consistency across waivers and streamline processes for providers.

Long Term Goal: Improved efficiency and simplified processes for families and providers