

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dept on Aging Observes Family Caregivers Awareness Month by Reminding about Resources to Assist *Administers the Family Caregiver Support Program*

SPRINGFIELD – November 25, 2014. Family caregivers help their loved ones with a broad range of activities which can be a critical component in providing long term care for older adults. Without the support of their relatives and caregivers, many older adults would have difficulty remaining in their homes and community. Increasing numbers in the aging population has led to an increased need for caregivers. But, caregivers also need support or risk putting their own health and well-being at risk which is the message from the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) in observance of National Family Caregiver Month.

“A family caregiver steps in to help a relative who can no longer manage without some assistance. It can be small tasks that increase over time until the family caregiver becomes the primary person responsible for managing the older adult’s needs. Often the family caregiver does not realize how important their role is until they need a break. It can be overwhelming and we want family caregivers to know about resources available to help them in their role of supporting an older adult loved one,” said IDoA Director John K. Holton, Ph.D.

Through IDoA, the state has resources for family caregivers to receive support. Through its partnership with the 13 Area Agencies on Aging and local service providers, IDoA offers information, assistance, counseling training, and respite care through the Family Caregiver Support Program. IDoA lists caregiver resources on its website at http://www.illinois.gov/aging/CommunityServices/caregiver/Pages/caregiver_links.aspx.

Director Holton also encourages families to use the upcoming holiday as an opportunity to assess the needs of older adult loved ones. When families gather for Thanksgiving, it may be determined their loved one needs assistance but does not ask. Some signs that assistance may be needed include:

- Decreased mobility, forgetfulness
- Neglected personal hygiene
- Change in appetite
- Unfilled and/or unopened medical prescriptions
- Lack of home maintenance
- Unusual display of unopened mail
- A loved one may be mishandling their finances, for example, not paying their bills or losing money.

For more information about programs and services to assist older adults in Illinois, their families and caregivers, including the Illinois Family Caregiver Support Program, log on to the department website at: <http://www.illinois.gov/aging/> or call the Department on Aging at 1-800-252-8966 or (TTY, hearing impaired use) call 1-888-206-1327.

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