



# Illinois Department on Aging recognizes National Caregiver Month

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*IDoA identifying new ways to provide relief to family caregivers*

**SPRINGFIELD** – As we come to the close of National Caregiver Month, the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is working to find new ways to help provide much-needed relief to unpaid, family caregivers. Working together with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), IDoA is calling on community members throughout Illinois to help families caring for their loved ones.

CNCS is a federal agency that helps millions of Americans improve the lives of their fellow citizens through service. Using combined resources, IDoA and CNCS are

working to assess the needs of caregivers in different areas of the state and develop volunteers to provide respite care and give a break to a family caregiver.

While still in the planning stages, this volunteer respite program will help to create a network of individuals who are trained in providing quality, compassionate respite care. Volunteers from churches, community centers and other social service organizations across the state will receive thorough training designed to prepare individuals to care for people who have chronic healthcare needs or disabilities.

According to a 2015 study by AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC), an estimated 34.2 million American adults serve as unpaid caregivers, the majority of which (86 percent) provide care for a relative. The same study indicates that 64 percent of caregivers experience moderate to high stress as a result of their caregiving situations.

“Family caregiving is complex, costly, stressful and demanding,” says IDoA Director, Jean Bohnhoff. “We are looking for ways to provide relief to this network of caregivers who have taken on what is the equivalent of a full-time job to care for their loved ones.”

The use of respite volunteers is not a new concept; in Illinois and across the nation, the use of trained, respite volunteers has been a successful tool to engage the community and allow families time to take care of themselves so that they can continue to care for their loved ones.