

The Office of Governor M. Jodi Rell



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Governor Rell Announces Pilot Program to Help Adults with Disabilities Live at Home

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced the opening of a pilot program aimed at helping adults with disabilities avoid expensive and confining nursing facility care by living in the community with cost-effective support services.

The new Connecticut Home Care Program for Disabled will use homemakers, visiting nurses and home health aides and other key services to bring up to 50 people with neurological disabilities out of nursing homes or prevent them from being institutionalized in the first place.

The program will target a relatively underserved age group – adults 18 to 64 with multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, Parkinson’s disease or other neurological degenerative disease that causes them to need professional help in managing services to keep them independent.

“This initiative is especially important as we expand our home care services to people with disabilities beyond the traditional age group of 65 and up,” Governor Rell said. “For years, the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders has been a tremendous help in maintaining quality of life for over 13,000 senior citizens. The new pilot program will start bringing these same benefits to our younger population with disabilities. This is also good news for taxpayers because home care services are invariably much less expensive than nursing home care.”

The Connecticut Home Care Program for Disabled pilot will help up to 50 adults who could not otherwise afford home care to remain in the community. Funded with \$720,000 in state dollars, the new program will target adults with neurological disabilities who do not currently qualify for Medicaid programs.

By helping pay for services like case management, homemaker, visiting nurses, home health aides, meals on wheels, companion, and occupational and physical therapy, the state program will also help participants avoid going onto Medicaid, which would be a more costly service for the state.

“For years, Connecticut has been a leader in services to help people with disabilities live in the community,” Governor Rell said. “We have worked with the federal government to use Medicaid dollars for community-based programs for elders, people with profound disabilities who need personal care assistance for daily living activities, and people with acquired brain injury, to name a few examples. However, there are other citizens with disabilities whose needs have not been covered or met completely. The result is ongoing risk of nursing facility placement or the inability to leave a nursing facility. The new Connecticut Home Care Program for Disabled will begin to fill an unmet need for the 18-to-64 population struggling with neurological disease.”

Department of Social Services Commissioner Michael P. Starkowski said, “The Connecticut Home Care Program for Disabled owes a lot to advocacy efforts by a number of non-profit groups during the legislative session. This is an important continuation of the state’s overall policy of helping people avoid institutional care when possible. Assuming the pilot is successful and cost-effective, we will determine how it can be developed to help additional people in the future.”

Participants may be asked to contribute to the cost of their service plan if their income exceeds 200% of the federal poverty level (\$1,702 monthly income for an individual). Asset limit for eligibility is \$20,328 for individuals and \$30,492 if married.

The Department of Social Services, administering agency for the Connecticut Home Care Program for Disabled, is opening applications on Monday, October 1, at 9 a.m. Referrals will be accepted at 1-800-445-5394 (toll-free) or 860-424-4904 (in Hartford area); choose option 4. Applicants will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.