



# Caregiver Support Program: An Overview

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# Overview

- Enacted by Congress on May 5, 2010, as part of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act under P.L. 111–163
- Created two new programs:
  - Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers
  - Program of General Caregiver Support Services
- Officially launched in May 2011



# Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

- Commonly referred to as the Family Caregiver Program and offers the following services:
  - Stipend to family caregivers of eligible Veterans
  - Health coverage through ChampVA for caregivers without health insurance.
  - Travel and lodging reimbursement for the caregiver.
  - Mental health treatment at VA for caregiver



# Which Veterans Are Eligible?

- Veterans who served after 9/11/01 (aka OEF/OIF/OND Veterans)
- Veterans with **injuries** including psychological trauma (PTSD) and other mental health disorders.
- Veterans requiring assistance with one or more activities of daily living or a need for **supervision or protection** based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury.



# General Caregiver Support Services Program

- Services available to all caregivers of Veterans.
- No application or approval is required for the General Caregiver Program.
- Does NOT offer stipend, health care coverage, travel/lodging reimbursement, or mental health counseling.



# Caregiver Support Line

- Call center based in Canandigua, NY, providing support and resources.
- Links caller to local VA for additional support.
- Available M-F, 8 a.m.-11 p.m. ET; Saturday, 10:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Toll free number 1-855-260-3274



# VA Caregiver Website

- [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov) or link through MS CoE website
- Caregiver Toolbox with diagnosis care sheets, tips and checklists, and worksheets.
- Search tool to find the CSC closest to you
- Sign up for e-mail updates
- Links to other sites of interest to Caregivers



# Role of the Caregiver Support Coordinator

- Coordination of application process for the Family Caregiver Program
- Follow up on CSL calls
- Program and resource development
- Outreach (internal and external)
- Coordination of education and support opportunities



# CSL PsychoEducational Support Groups

- Open to Caregivers of Veterans of all eras
- Moderated by Caregiver Support Line staff
- On 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday each month
- Upcoming topics:
  - **Leaning Into Love: Building Strong Relationship Bonds (February 2014)**
  - **Good Grief: Finding Hope in the Necessary Losses of Being a Caregiver (March 2014)**



# Building Better Caregivers

- Open to Caregivers of Veterans of all eras
- Online workshop for Caregivers who are caring for someone with dementia, memory problems, PTSD, a serious brain injury, or any other serious illness or injury.
- Workshops are 6 weeks, highly interactive with a cohort of 20-25 caregivers
- Focus is on self-care and skill development
- Online community for program alumni



# Live Satellite Broadcasts

- Understanding PTSD For Caregivers
  - Dr. Karen Krinsley, PTSD Section Chief, Boston VA and VA National Center for PTSD Consultation
  - Original air date 8/7/12
  - Available on DVD
- Understanding TBI & Family Relationships for Caregivers
  - Dr. Ajit Pai, Medical Director, Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA
  - Original air date 5/14/13
  - Available on DVD



# Self-Care Courses

- Four courses available to Caregivers of any eligible Veteran who receives care at VA.
- Each course is 3 hours in length.
- Topics:
  - Problem Solving and Effective Communication
  - Managing Stress
  - Taking Care of Yourself
  - Utilizing Technology



# Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program

- Nationwide program
- Caregivers of Veterans of all eras are eligible to participate as a mentor or mentee.
- Mentors are required to participate in training before being assigned to a Mentee.
- Background and fingerprint checks are required for Mentors through the local VA Medical Center Voluntary Services Department.



## Getting Involved

- Caregivers interested in participating in CSL telephone support, Building Better Caregivers, Self Care courses, or other programs discussed in this presentation should contact their local CSC directly for assistance.



## Questions?

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