

HELP A LOUISIANA CAREGIVER IN NOVEMBER

November is National Caregivers Awareness Month and the Louisiana Lifespan Respite Coalition wants to help educate caregivers about the services and supports available to them.

One out of every three Louisiana adults is a caregiver, according to the Coalition.

A caregiver is more than just a parent or guardian.

“A caregiver is someone who provides the primary means of care and support for children with special needs, adults with disabilities or older adults in Louisiana who otherwise could not care for themselves,” said Coalition member Kelly Viator, Executive Director of Louisiana ALS.

Louisiana caregivers provide more than 600 million hours of care in a year, and the majority care for someone under the age of 75. In the U.S., 10,000 individuals turn 65 every day.

Ninety percent of Louisiana’s caregivers will not get a break, and for the few who do, they will get too little too late, said Ms. Viator.

In short, the typical person providing care in this state...a middle-aged working-woman caring for her aged mother in her home...is in a very stressed predicament.

How can one help?

“The problem is most caregivers don’t know how to ask for help,” said Ms. Viator.

Lending a hand to the caregiver is the goal of the Louisiana Lifespan Respite Coalition, and organizations are needed in the conversation about how to find resources for those who assist elders, or adults and children with disabilities or special needs.

To better coordinate resources, seminars and services, the Lifespan Respite Coalition is providing free web-listings at www.LouisianaAnswers.com. Organizations can list their services, seminars and other supports for caregivers, whether serving the elderly, children or adults with special needs.

Also at www.LouisianaAnswers.com, families can find a continuum of services to help the caregiver plan, so they don’t get overwhelmed.

“Resources in Louisiana are still not as plentiful as we’d like, but that could be due to a lack of information. That’s why we hope every program...from the most basic to the most sophisticated, from the church hall to the hospital...will list their services at LouisianaAnswers.com,” said Ms. Viator

The national Lifespan Respite Care Program provides grants to state agencies to maximize existing resources and ensure that respite is available and accessible to families. Louisiana received a three-year grant of \$200,000 in 2010 to coordinate respite resources in the state. The Aging and Disability Resource Centers of LouisianaAnswers.com, programs of the Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs, serve as the central source for respite information. For information, contact Tammy LeBlanc (225) 219.0223.