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 2nd Tuesday and 4th 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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