



Sierra Sacramento Valley Medicine
Vol. 60 / No. 3 - May / Jun 2009

Caring for Those Who Care

By Taryn Benson, MHA, Education Coordinator, Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center

What Is Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center?

The Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center is part of a system of California Resource Centers founded over 22 years ago. Caregiver Resource Centers throughout California were established state-wide under special legislation and signed into law in 1984. Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center is an independent, private, non-profit program funded through a contract with the California State Department of Mental Health, grants from the Area 4 Agency on Aging and private donations. Del Oro provides a coordinated resource system to meet the needs of caregivers caring for a loved one with brain impairment or for someone who is frail.

How Can Del Oro Help Caregivers?

We are a local provider of support for caregivers. Our comprehensive package of services includes information and referral, family consultation, family counseling, respite care, legal and financial consultation with an attorney, education and training and support groups. Our office is located in Carmichael and we cover a wide territory, serving 13 Counties: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba. Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center's mission is to improve the overall well-being of family caregivers throughout the caregiving journey. We are all about encouragement, empowerment, empathy, and support for the caregiver.

Eligibility

Family Caregivers are eligible for services through our contracts with the State Department of Mental Health, Area 4 Agency on Aging (A4AA) and Area 11 Agency on Aging (A11AA). Del Oro clients are those caring full-time for a loved one who is 60 years or older with physical and/or cognitive limitations who resides in our 13-county service area. If there is a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or Dementia, the care receiver may be under 59. As the demand for some of our services exceeds current funding, Del Oro has an established priority list of eligible caregivers. Depending on the service requested and the severity of the situation at the time of intake, the caregiver will be placed on the waiting list, placed on the waiting list as a high priority, or served immediately if dealing with a crisis or terminal care situation. As Del Oro delivers a comprehensive package of caregiver services, most caregivers on the waiting list are simultaneously using other services such as education/training, counseling, legal consultation, and support groups. Caregivers in need will also be referred to appropriate community resources.

How does one become a Del Oro client?

Upon making that important phone call, callers will go through a brief over-the-phone assessment to first determine eligibility. Our services are available to those providing care for a person whose brain impairment occurred during adulthood (age 18 and older) and who is not eligible for assistance from other publicly supported programs or similar benefits. Once eligibility has been established, caregivers will receive a phone call from a Del Oro Family Consultant within 3-5 business days to conduct an in-depth over-the-phone or an in-person interview to assess his/her individual situation as well as the condition of the person(s) for whom he/she is caring. From there, the Family Consultant develops an individualized care plan and partners side-by-side with the caregiver/client to provide relevant and beneficial services directly through Del Oro and refer clients to outside agencies that provide additional assistance.

How Can Del Oro Help Doctors?

According to the AARP Public Policy Institute, 4 million Californians are caring for a family member over the age of 18. Chances are you are providing care to a patient who is also a caregiver. Many caregivers take great pride in what they do, and compromise their own health by trying to be a caregiver super-hero. They may be desperate for assistance and appreciate physicians who understand the complexity of their situation. Older adults in particular often need a nudge from their trusted family physician to reach out to a program for formal support. We offer a comprehensive package of services, with one-on-one emotional support from our Family Consultant to promote a more relaxed, health-focused, medication compliant, educated, less-stressed patient whose doctor appointments are more beneficial and productive.

Further information is available on our website, www.deloro.org, or by calling us at 916-971-0893 or 1-800-635-0220

tbenson@deloro.org