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## **Governor Rell Announces New Initiative to Help Nursing Home Residents Come Home**

*'Money Follows the Person' Aims to Build on State's Other Services, Enabling Community Living for Elders, Citizens with Disabilities*

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced that applications are now available for a new program aimed at helping people leave nursing home care and return to community living.

The "Money Follows the Person" (MFP) initiative is designed to save taxpayer money on expensive nursing home care while helping up to 700 senior citizens and persons with disabilities enjoy the benefits of living in their own homes.

Last year, Connecticut received federal approval for a "Money Follows the Person" demonstration program from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Medicaid is jointly funded by the federal and state governments as a health care safety net for people with very low incomes and financial assets.

Under the MFP initiative, the federal government will provide increased Medicaid funding, reimbursing the state for 75 percent of costs for the first year back in the community instead of the customary 50 percent. Essentially, the enhanced federal support is a financial incentive for states to reduce the use of expensive institutional care for Medicaid recipients.

"This initiative represents a tremendous step forward in our efforts to help people with disabilities and their families live in their communities," Governor Rell said. "This approach will be cost-effective for taxpayers and lead to wonderful improvements in the quality of life for many of our elders and people with disabilities."

Applications for the program and further information are available at the Web site [www.ct.gov/moneyfollowstheperson](http://www.ct.gov/moneyfollowstheperson) or by calling (888) 99-CTMFP.

The Department of Social Services plans to host a series of outreach meetings across the state over the coming weeks. Applications will be available and assistance will be provided to complete applications. In addition, applications will be available at Area Agencies on Aging, independent living centers, senior centers and other community sites.

For years, Connecticut has been a leader in developing community-based alternatives to institutional care for people who can return or stay home. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, for example, currently serves about 14,000 individuals statewide.

Money Follows the Person builds on current programs by offering enhanced community services and support to people who have resided in nursing facilities for at least six months. Enhancements include access to the Department of Social Services' new emergency back-up support system.

The program will serve individuals with physical disabilities, mental illness and developmental disabilities. Options for residence in the community will include the person's own home, a family home, an apartment or congregate housing such as assisted living facilities.

As the lead agency for Connecticut's MFP initiative, the Department of Social Services will oversee a broad range of services to reach the following goals:

- Transition 700 people to the community
- Increase dollars to home- and community-based services
- Increase the percentage of persons receiving long-term care in the community versus long-term care in institutions
- Decrease hospital discharges to nursing facilities among those requiring care after discharge
- Increase the probability of persons returning to the community within the first six months of admission to an institution

Individualized care plans will be created based on need. While participants will direct the transition process themselves to the greatest extent possible, transition coordinators will be available to provide one-to-one assistance. They will assist with community supports, navigating the systems and accessing resources. If people need housing, coordinators will assist by locating acceptable apartments or other living arrangements.

Some funds may be available to assist individuals with setting up a household in the community. Rental assistance will also be available for those who qualify. In addition, six different service and support packages will be available to meet the individual needs of those who transition to the community.