



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Fact Sheet: American Rescue Plan Act Investments in Informal Caregivers

Reason for investment: The number Informal caregivers grew exponentially during COVID 19 when work flexibility made it possible for more family members to provide care. The growth in family caregivers in large part addressed the sudden surge in demand for community direct care workers over the past 17 months when the shift to community care in lieu of nursing home grew exponentially. There is an urgent need to support the family caregivers who are providing this critical support which is stabilizing the workforce and providing the option for individuals to remain in the community.

Target population: Caregivers of individuals who meet the level of need requirements who are currently served under the Medicare Savings Program, home and community-based waivers, Community First Choice or Money Follows the Person.

What services will be provided: Caregiver assessment, dementia supports, care coordination, respite services, and training will be available to the caregivers. The service menu is based on research conducted by the UCONN, Center on Aging. The state will implement the evidence-based COPE ¹ (Care of Persons with Dementia in their Environments) model as part of this initiative. The state also seeks to build capacity related to delivery of care through implementation of the Skills2Care model. Services have the potential to improve health-related outcomes while reducing Medicaid costs.

How does the COPE model work: The 4-month COPE intervention is designed to optimize older adults' functional independence, and to improve caregiver dementia management skills and health-related outcomes. COPE features 10 in-home occupational therapy visits, and 1 in-home visit and 1 telephone contact by an advanced practice nurse.

What is the expected outcome of COPE? The primary outcome for older adults with dementia is functional independence; secondary outcomes are activity engagement, quality of life, and prevention or alleviation of neuropsychiatric symptoms. Caregiver outcomes include perceived well-being and confidence in using activities to manage dementia symptoms.

What is Skills2Care²? Skills2 Care® is a research-tested program that improves skills and well-being of caregivers, reduces challenging behaviors that often occur with dementia and slows decline in daily function of people with dementia. Occupational therapists certified in Skills2 Care® teach caregivers how to manage the day-to-day challenges of dementia. Program content includes: understanding dementia, reducing challenging behaviors, promoting function, communicating effectively, making the home safer, ways to care for themselves while providing the best care possible.

¹ [Effectiveness of the Care of Persons With Dementia in Their Environments Intervention When Embedded in a Publicly Funded Home- and Community-Based Service Program - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

² [Gitlin, L.N., Hauck, W., Dennis, M., Winter, L. \(2005\). Maintenance of effects of the Home Environmental Skill-building Program for family caregivers and individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. Journal of Gerontology, 60A, 368-374](#)