



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
ONE ASHBURTON PLACE, ROOM 1109  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02148  
(617) 727-7600

MITT ROMNEY  
GOVERNOR

KERRY HEALEY  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JENNIFER DAVIS CAREY  
SECRETARY

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**CONTACT:**  
Je'Lesia M. Jones  
(617) 222-7458

**ELDER AFFAIRS AND THE OFFICE OF MEDICAID LAUNCH ENHANCED ADULT  
FAMILY CARE**

Elder Affairs Secretary Jennifer Davis Carey will announce the "Enhanced Adult Family Care Program," an expansion of the MassHealth Adult Foster Care Program (AFC), Tuesday, Nov. 21, at 2 p.m. at Elder Services of Merrimack Valley, 360 Merrimack St., Building 5, in Lawrence. State Representative Barbara L'Italien will attend.

AFC services are provided in a home setting and include assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing, and other personal care, instrumental activities of daily living, such as medication management and food shopping, nursing oversight, and care management. The Enhanced Adult Family Care program will now be able to meet the needs of individuals requiring a higher level of AFC care and broaden the spectrum of caregivers to include most family members in a home setting; provided by family members or friends thereby preventing or delaying institutional care.

"Elders and persons with disabilities most often wish to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible," said Secretary Carey. "This new program allows MassHealth beneficiaries the new option of receiving care from a loved one in a home setting."

This new level of AFC and changes to the guidelines regarding who may be a caregiver were based in part from Caring Homes which is a non-MassHealth program for eligible elders provided in a home setting by family members or friends to individuals with complex medical needs. "This program is built on the foundation of family care giving," said Al Norman, executive director of Mass Home Care. "Sons and daughters will love this program because it allows them to be paid caregivers to their parents."

The Enhanced Adult Family Care program will not only allow elders and persons with disabilities to move into a caregiver's home, but will allow a caregiver to move into the individual's home. Participants must be 16 years or older and meet MassHealth financial and clinical eligibility standards. Caregivers may be any friend or family member other than a spouse, parent, or legally responsible relative and must meet qualifications specified by the state.

"The Enhanced Family Care program provides critical support for family members and others who provide the important care that people with disabilities and elders need to remain in their homes,"

said Gerry Morrissey, Assistant Secretary for Communities and Disabilities.

MassHealth pays for Enhance AFC if an individual is financially eligible for MassHealth and requires physical assistance with at least three of the following activities: bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring, ambulating, eating; or, physical assistance with two of the activities above and management of behaviors that require caregiver intervention such as wandering, verbally abusive behavioral symptoms, physically abusive behavioral symptoms, socially inappropriate or disruptive behavioral symptoms, or resisting care.

“Under the Caring Homes program, a family member could take in an elder and provide a home for them in the community,” said Rep. Barbara L’Italien. “The payment made to the caregiver lessens the financial burden on the caregiver and would cost less than a nursing home placement. It is a win-win for our seniors and for our taxpayers.”

“This is an important piece of our Community First agenda, in that it expands choices for our members to receive appropriate care in a community setting,” said Beth Waldman, Director of Medicaid.

The timing of the launch of this expansion is significant as it occurs during National Family Caregivers Month, Massachusetts Family Caregivers month, and immediately prior to Thanksgiving, a time in which family members may discover that an elder or person with a disability is in need of additional supports to remain in the community. A caregiver in the Caring Homes program will attend the Adult Family Care launch to discuss her experiences caring for her mother with the support of the program. Elder advocates and other caregivers will also attend.

For additional information, call MassHealth Customer Service at 1-800-841-2900 or Elder Affairs at 1-800-AGE-INFO or 1-800-243-4636.

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