

## Dementia Care Specialist Program *A Wise Investment: Ensure Access to Services Statewide*

**Ensure critical programs and services are accessible *statewide* by expanding Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) services to the remaining one-third of Wisconsin's older adults without access.**

**Dementia is life changing and expensive** - Every 66 seconds someone in the U.S. develops Alzheimer's disease. It changes their life and the lives of those around them and substantially **adds to the cost of health and long-term care, especially publicly funded care.**

**Dementia in Wisconsin is on the rise** - In Wisconsin we estimate 115,000 individuals 65 and older are living with some form of clinically diagnosable dementia. By 2040, that population is expected to grow to 240,000, not including the estimated 5% of individuals younger than 65 living with dementia. The care and treatment of persons with dementia is now being described as a **public health emergency.**

**Dementia Care Specialists save taxpayers money** - DCSs housed within Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) help persons with dementia stay in their communities. **Each day that an individual remains in the community and delays the need for expensive, publicly funded institutional care saves taxpayers up to \$165 per day or \$59,171 annually** (Elderly Benefit Specialist Monetary Impact 2018: Health and Long-Term Care Benefits). DCSs achieve this through specialized education to ADRC staff, providers and families; in-home consultation; volunteer development; and community coalition building. The program aims to positively impact the lives of individuals and families living with dementia, as well as improve the sustainability of our long-term care system by reducing or eliminating their need for public funding. The DCS program is a wise and sound investment of public dollars. (Note: Cost-savings depend upon *community-based* public benefit programs accessed by each individual and his/her caregivers.)

### Wisconsin Communities and Citizens Benefit from Investment in Dementia Care Specialists

Financial investment in Dementia Care Specialists has been an effective, low cost approach to providing tremendous reach into local communities. The total annual state investment of \$1,920,000 GPR covers approximately 66% of Wisconsin's older population\* with 24 positions (21 ADRCs in 34 counties and 3 tribal agencies). ADRCs and tribes awarded a DCS grant receive \$80,000 GPR/year for costs related to these highly-valued positions. DCS activities draw down additional critical federal dollars which help fund other important ADRC services. Estimates identify more than 1.26 million older Wisconsinites (2015); this number is expected to grow to more than 1.47 million by 2020.\*\* Based upon 24 DCSs now serving 66% of the state's older population, **a minimum addition of 12 new DCSs will be needed to support the remaining one-third of the older population currently without access to the full scope of services provided by the DCSs.** The addition of 12 positions would bring the state total to 36 DCSs and would create a statewide ratio of Dementia Care Specialists to persons age 60 and older of 1:41,000 by 2020. Currently 25 ADRCs and 8 tribes operate without a Dementia Care Specialist. The Department of Health Services, the Wisconsin ADRCs, and tribal leaders will need to determine the most efficient and effective distribution of Dementia Care Specialist services to ensure adequate access to DCS services statewide.

#### **Budget Request:**

- **Budget Year 2019 - July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020: \$480,000** Cost to add 6 new DCS positions
- **Budget Year 2020 - July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021: \$960,000** Cost to continue 6 DCS added in FY 2019 and to add the remaining 6 new DCS positions needed to achieve statewide coverage

**TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST for 2019-2021 Biennial Budget: \$1,440,000**

\*Percentage based upon the state population of individuals age 60 or older.

\*\*Wisconsin Department of Administration Updated Population Projections for Counties by Age: 2010 - 2040; Vintage 2013

**As highly trained professionals, Dementia Care Specialists (DCS) support people with dementia and their caregivers to ensure the highest quality of life possible while remaining in the community and saving individual and taxpayer dollars.**

According to the Dementia Care Specialist Program: 2017 Activity Report:

- DCSs had 2,615 contacts with customers ranging in age from 20 – 103 years old. Over 40% of the DCS contacts were from individuals seeking help for themselves as a caregiver and nearly half of these caregivers were aged 60-79.
- DCSs provide local expertise on Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. They maintain strong connections with community partners and are knowledgeable about community resources and services. DCSs received over 2,600 referrals last year (39% from county and tribal agencies). They provided 5,881 referrals to community resources and programs, averaging more than 2.25 referrals per customer.
- ADRCs received nearly 20,000 calls last year regarding Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias; 17% of those calls resulted in a memory screen or conversation about a memory screen. DCSs provided nearly 500 memory screens last year with other ADRC staff providing over 3,400 additional memory screens. (ADRCs are the only community resource that provides memory screening.)
- DCSs share their expertise widely working with businesses, employers, local organizations, and the community in support of fostering dementia-friendly communities. Concentrated outreach, community education, training, and facilitation of community projects help increase awareness of the unique needs of individuals with dementia and their caregivers. DCSs participated in 1,651 community events last year reaching nearly 30,000 attendees.
- DCSs provide valuable case consultation, including crisis planning and prevention. They spend time educating individuals and families about dementias and discuss person-centered plans to improve outcomes related to changes in communication, behavior, and symptoms. In 2017, DCSs documented 1,298 consultations with professionals (including county/tribal staff and professionals from many other health, long-term care, social service, and law enforcement agencies).
- DCSs support the professional development of other ADRC staff.
  - They ensure staff is trained in consistent reliable memory screening including the cognition portion of the long-term care functional screen.
  - They assure fidelity, reliability and consistency of memory screen completion.
- DCSs have strong partnerships with other Alzheimer’s and dementia agencies. They assure ADRCs collaborate, not duplicate services that are in high demand. DCSs are present in local communities and available to meet 1:1 in peoples’ homes.

**Dementia Care Specialists have four primary goals:**

1. Provide free information and assistance to adults with memory or cognitive concerns, or who have been given a dementia diagnosis;
2. Provide information and support to family members and friends who are caregivers;
3. Help develop dementia-friendly communities where people with dementia can remain active and safe, and caregivers feel supported; and
4. Train other staff at the ADRCs and other county/tribal and municipal offices to be dementia-capable.

Additionally, DCSs implement evidence-based health promotion programs/activities for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.

**Dementia  
Care  
Specialists**

Serving Individuals,  
Families and the  
Community

