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NEWS

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State Residents Invited to Participate in Sweeping Long-Term Care Survey

HARTFORD—Connecticut residents are being invited to participate in a groundbreaking new study that will serve as a roadmap for improving the long-term care system that serves thousands of older adults and persons with disabilities.

The Center on Aging of the UConn Health Center in Farmington is reaching out statewide via mail, telephone, the Internet and in-person interviews to the public and to private and public providers of long-term care services. The center expects to contact more than 20,000 Connecticut residents and providers and to report preliminary results in January.

Connecticut residents of any age may participate online at: <http://www.uconn-aging.uchc.edu/ctsurvey> or by contacting Irene Reed at the Center on Aging at (860) 679-2089 or via email at ireed@uchc.edu. The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete.

Long-term care is often incorrectly associated exclusively with nursing home care or insurance. In reality, it encompasses a wide range of assistance, services or devices provided over an extended period of time to meet medical, personal or social needs in a variety of settings and locations.

Under this broad definition, virtually every person in Connecticut, regardless of age, health or financial status, will need long-term care at some point in their lives. The care helps people live as independently as possible and may be provided in a person's home, at other sites in the community or in managed or institutional settings.

“We will document the long-term care needs, desires and expectations of Connecticut's residents,” said Julie Robison, Ph.D., of the Center on Aging. “We'll analyze the current system by highlighting its strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for the future.”

Though the Connecticut Medicaid program alone spends about \$2 billion annually on long-term care services for people of all ages, the state has not conducted a comprehensive needs assessment in more than 20 years.

“Despite the best intentions of everyone involved, no one knows for certain if the long-term care system is working as efficiently as it should to deliver quality services,” said Connecticut Commission on Aging Executive Director Julia Evans Starr.

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To remedy this situation, the Connecticut General Assembly this year authorized and funded a new assessment in consultation with the state's Long-Term Care Advisory Council, Connecticut Commission on Aging and Long-Term Care Planning Committee. Additional funding has been provided by the Connecticut Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

The following are the assessment's major goals:

- Document the public and private inventory of long-term care services and supports currently being provided in Connecticut.
- Assess which segments of the population are receiving services.
- Project the number of persons who will require long-term care services over the next 30 years.
- Document the needs, desires and expectations of Connecticut's residents as they anticipate the need for long-term care services for their families and themselves for up to 30 years in the future.
- Recommend changes to existing programs and services and prospective new programs and services to better serve residents and families needing long-term care.

“This is a tremendous opportunity to gather information that will ultimately lead to more long-term care options--and more independent lives--for present and future generations of Connecticut residents,” said Evans Starr.