

Department of Human Services • Office of Communications • Dena J. Smith, Press Secretary
Two Peachtree Street, NW • Suite 29.426 • Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142
Phone: 404-656-4937 • Fax: 404-651-6815

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Media contact only: (404) 656-4937

Georgia Wins National Award for Innovation in Community Living Initiatives

ATLANTA (GA) – The U.S. Administration on Aging announced that Georgia has won the 2011 Excellence in Action award for Outstanding Achievement in Changing Systems by a State. The national honor recognizes the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Aging Services for developing programs that improve services and support for older adults and people with disabilities.

“We are building an unprecedented number of bridges across agencies and divisions to give consumers more convenience and flexibility,” said Dr. James Bulot, director of the DHS Division of Aging Services. “Our collaborators include the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Veterans Administration, the Georgia Department of Community Health, and many others.”

The Georgia programs that have attracted national attention help organizations coordinate activities and streamline processes to give older adults and people with disabilities more control over services and efficient access to information. Initiatives with widespread attention include the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), the Community Living Program (CLP), and the new Veterans-Directed Home- and Community-Based Services Program (VD-HCBS).

- The ADRC serves older adults and people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers by providing information and counseling about long-term services and supports. This is accomplished through partnerships within aging and disabilities fields.
- In selected areas, CLP provides eligible older adults and caregivers with funds to hire and supervise in-home help and also to purchase needed supplies.
- In selected areas, VD-HCBS gives eligible veterans and their caregivers the option of managing their in-home care budgets, workers, and supplies.

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Georgia's aging and disability network offers a range of services and information to help individuals successfully age in place. Some services have a waiting list or may not be available in every county. All Area Agencies on Aging, however, offer quick access to general resource information, adult protective services, elder abuse prevention education, answers about Medicare and related products, senior legal hotline help, and caregiver support. For more information, contact the Division of Aging Services at 1-866-55AGING (1-866-552-4464) or visit <http://www.aging.dhr.georgia.gov>.

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