



For Immediate Release -- December 22, 2006

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## PRESIDENT SIGNS LIFESPAN RESPITE BILL -- WISCONSIN WELL POSITIONED TO RESPOND AND SERVE

Madison, WI: The Respite Care Association of Wisconsin applauds the signing of the *Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2006 (HR 3248)* into law yesterday. Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW) is a lead member of the Lifespan Respite Task Force, a national coalition of national and state organizations working to support a national respite policy.

Nearly eight years ago Wisconsin became the third state in the nation to adopt and implement a statewide lifespan respite program. Today five pilot programs serve seven counties across the state and help family caregivers access quality, affordable respite care. "RCAW has been working for unfettered access to quality respite care across the lifespan since 1999. The bipartisan effort to pass this legislation supports the conviction that family caregivers are indeed the backbone of Wisconsin's - and all states - long-term care system," stated Jim Schroeder, executive director.

The new law authorizes roughly \$289 million to be allocated over five years for grants to develop Lifespan Respite Programs. Components of the law include training and recruitment of respite care workers and volunteers, caregiver training and information dissemination, all of which RCAW embraces in its charter. "Wisconsin is well positioned to leverage this program as one of only a handful of states with established infrastructure to deliver these critical services," said Schroeder.

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Over the next twelve months RCAW will focus efforts to ensure federal funding is appropriated, and will collaborate with the Governor's office to secure a leadership position to obtain the maximum support for Wisconsin's family caregivers.

Respite care is temporary relief (on a planned or emergency basis) for caregivers and families who are caring for people with disabilities or other special needs such as chronic or terminal illnesses; or who are at risk of abuse and neglect.

For more information, visit [www.respitecarewi.org](http://www.respitecarewi.org) or email [info@respitecarewi.org](mailto:info@respitecarewi.org)

Respite Care Association of Wisconsin is a not-for-profit agency serving as the central point of contact for lifespan respite programs across the state. RCAW administers five (5) pilot projects, serving seven (7) counties (Ashland, Bayfield, Eau Claire, Chippewa, Dodge, Washington, Fond du Lac) in Wisconsin. Services of RCAW include training, technical assistance and products designed to promote, support and expand quality statewide respite care across the lifespan.

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