

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**November 4, 2015**

**MEDIA CONTACT**  
**Tasya Peterson**  
**602-542-4296**  
[TasyaPeterson@azdes.gov](mailto:TasyaPeterson@azdes.gov)

## **DES Announces Support for Caregivers during Arizona Family Caregiver Month**

**PHOENIX** – DES celebrates Arizona Family Caregiver Month by recognizing the valuable role family caregivers play when care comes home. The theme for National Family Caregiver Month 2015 is “Respite: Care for Caregivers.” Family Caregiver Month is organized to thank, support, educate, and empower family caregivers. [CLICK HERE for the 2015 Governor’s Proclamation!](#)

"This year, we are encouraging people to speak up during Family Caregiver Month," said David Best, Program Services Manager for the Independent Living Supports Administration within the DES Division of Aging and Adult Services. "One of the most important attributes of being an advocate for your loved one is the willingness and the ability to speak up and keep your eye on the ultimate goal of protecting, not only the health and safety of your loved ones, but your own as well."

A loved one’s care does not always take place in hospitals, nursing homes, doctor offices, or medical clinics. Most care actually occurs in the home – and that’s a good thing! Family caregivers have the best interests of their loved ones at heart. Caregivers take on the responsibility of ensuring a friend or family member has the highest quality of life available. Arizona’s family caregivers are front and center in providing care every day – enabling their loved ones to stay at home longer where they are happier and healthier. But caregiving at home can take its toll and it certainly takes a lot of planning.

### **FAST FACTS:**

- Most adults would prefer to age in place. Ninety percent of adults over the age of 65 would prefer to stay in their current home as they age. Family, friends, and neighbors provide 80 percent of the care for the elderly!
- Two out of every five adults are family caregivers. Thirty-nine percent of all American adults are caring for a loved one who is sick, disabled, or living with frailties of old age. That’s up from 30 percent in 2010.
- Family caregivers are the backbone of the Arizona’s long-term care system. Family caregivers provide more than \$9 billion worth of unpaid care each year! That’s more than the entire state budget for Arizona, and it highlights a big reason why we need to support family caregivers...it makes fiscal sense!

- Family caregivers are the only people who are present with patients in all care settings. Patients may have more than one doctor; nurses change shifts; prescriptions may be filled at different pharmacies. But family caregivers are there as full partners with their loved ones through it all.
- Complex care happens in the home. Nearly half of family caregivers perform sophisticated medical/nursing tasks for their loved ones – such as providing wound care and operating specialized medical equipment – and up to 70 percent manage medications for their loved ones.
- Many families make changes at home because of their caregiving responsibilities. Some families have to tighten their belts at home to pay for out-of-pocket caregiving costs (an average of \$5,500 per year). And many more have to make home alterations to ensure safety, security, and cleanliness for their loved ones.
- It’s not just women doing the caregiving. Men are now almost as likely to say they are family caregivers as women (37 percent of men; 40 percent of women). And 36 percent of younger Americans between ages 18 and 29 are family caregivers as well, including one million young people who care for loved ones with Alzheimer’s disease.
- Caregiver stress can lead to abuse. Some of the same factors that are believed to cause caregiver stress also raise the risk of abuse.

 <p><b>Family Caregiver Support Program</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Family Caregiver Support Program</a> is funded by the Older Americans Act and provides five core services in support of family caregivers and grandparents raising grandchildren. The services include information and access assistance, support groups, training, counseling, and respite care, allowing caregivers to take a break.</p>
	<p>The <a href="#">Arizona Caregiver Coalition</a> was developed collaboratively through the Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging. The coalition provides a variety of information and resources for family caregivers, including the statewide Caregiver Resource Line (<b>888-737-7494</b>).</p>
 <p><i>Keeping Kids with Kin</i></p>	<p>DES is a charter member in <a href="#">Central Arizona Kinship Care Coalition</a>.</p>

###