

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**HHS GIVES GRANTS TO 17 STATES TO HELP PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES LIVE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES**

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt today announced \$28.5 million in grants to 17 states to help people of all ages with disabilities or long-term illnesses live in their homes and participate fully in community life.

“President Bush is committed to removing barriers to equality for the 54 million Americans living with disabilities. These Real Choices Systems Change grants will help those with disabilities exercise meaningful choices about how and where to live their lives,” said Secretary Leavitt.

The grants are part of President Bush’s “New Freedom Initiative,” which promotes the goal of community living for individuals with disabilities and long-term illnesses. Under this initiative, which began in 2001, 10 federal agencies work with states and other entities to remove barriers to community living.

"We are committed to removing the barriers preventing Americans of all ages who live with disabilities from participating in their communities. These grants will continue to help these individuals make their own choices on what services they get, who provides those services and how and where to live," said Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Mark B. McClellan. “States that received these grants in previous years have had a positive experience that shows us that more person-centered care is the right approach.”

The grants awarded today will help states and other eligible entities improve their community support systems. Seventeen grants were awarded in two grant categories:

- Family to Family Health Care Information and Education Center Grants - \$1.6 million to 10 states to establish family run centers that provide information, education and training opportunities for families with children with special health care needs. Previously, HHS has awarded \$2.8 million in grant funds to create 19 such centers across the country.

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- Systems Transformation Grants - \$26.8 million to 10 states to target key elements critical to developing more comprehensive and integrated long term support systems. These include better coordination of services that may be managed by different agencies; more services directed by the person receiving them; better funding for community-based living; and emphasis on quality control in community settings.

Today's announcement closely follows last month's award of \$15 million in Aging and Disability Resource Center grants to 19 states to help families sort through the maze of long-term care services available in their communities. The grants, also part of the New Freedom Initiative, are funded jointly by CMS and the Administration on Aging.

Additional information is available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/newfreedom>

For more information on the New Freedom Initiative, visit the CMS Web site at www.cms.hhs.gov/newfreedom/default.asp.

FY 2005 Real Choice Systems Change Grant Awards

Systems Transformation Grant Awardees

State	Organization	FY2005 Award
AR	Department of Human Services	\$2,856,575
IA	Department of Human Services	\$2,286,469
LA	Department of Health & Hospitals	\$3,022,545
MA	University of Mass. Medical School	\$2,893,946
ME	Department of Health & Human Services	\$2,564,610
MO	Department of Mental Health	\$2,971,944
NH	Department of Health & Human Services	\$2,066,699
NM	State of New Mexico	\$2,736,384
OR	State of Oregon	\$2,444,193
SC	Lt. Governor's Office on Aging	\$2,971,779
TOTAL		\$26,815,144

Family to Family Health Information and Education Center Awardees		
State	Organization	FY2005 Award
CT	Favor, Inc.	\$165,000
ID	Idaho Parent Unlimited, Inc.	\$165,000
MI	SE Michigan Health Assoc. Parent Participation Program	\$165,000
NH	NH Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities	\$165,000
OR	Family Action Coalition Team	\$165,000
RI	RI Parent Information Network	\$165,000
SC	Family Connection of South Carolina, Inc.	\$165,000
TX	Texas Parent to Parent	\$165,000
VA	Medical Home Plus, Inc.	\$165,000
WA	Washington PAVE	\$165,000
	TOTAL	\$1,650,000