



VA and Minnesota Projects Win Rosalynn Carter Leadership In Caregiving Awards

Named in honor of a great humanitarian, the [Rosalynn Carter Leadership in Caregiving Award](#) is the highest award given in the caregiving field. This award recognizes innovative partnerships between community agencies and caregiving researchers that bridge the gap between science and practice.

In 2008, a record number of award nominations came in from all over the world. After reviewing all applications and narrowing the list to two finalists, the RCI selection committee chose to present awards this year to BOTH finalists. Both winners are innovative projects that utilize partnerships to move effective caregiver support programs to widespread use in the community quickly and efficiently.

The winners of the 2008 Rosalynn Carter Leadership in Caregiver Award are:

The REACH VA Project, a partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, Geriatrics and Extended Care and the VA Medical Center at Memphis;

REACH VA is the first national clinical translation of a proven dementia behavioral intervention. Based on the REACH II (Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregivers Health) study funded by the National Institute on Aging and the National Institute of Nursing Research, REACH VA is a 6-month intervention that focuses on information, safety, caregiver health and well-being, and care recipient behavior management.

With its commitment to training and resources for caregivers, the VA has made it possible to implement REACH VA broadly. Clinical staff from 30 VA Medical Center Home-Based Primary Care programs in 36 cities and 19 states have volunteered to learn and deliver the intervention to stressed caregivers of dementia patients.

The goal of the project is to raise the standard of care provided to dementia caregivers and patients using evidence-based interventions. With this intervention being offered on such a large scale, the VA hopes to impact many caregivers with this project.

Team members from the REACH VA Project who were in Americus October 23rd to receive the award from Mrs. Carter were: Dr. Jennifer Martindale-Adams, VA Medical Center, Memphis and Dr. Linda Nichols, VA Medical Center,

Memphis. They received a statuette and a \$10,000 check to help fund the continuation of the project.

The second winner of the Rosalynn Carter Leadership in Caregiving Award is **Minnesota's NYU Caregiver Intervention Project**, funded by the Administration on Aging Alzheimer's Demonstration Grants to States. This project is being implemented in four pilot regions of Minnesota.

The NYU Caregiver Intervention Project has three goals:

- to develop and expand affordable, accessible, and culturally appropriate evidence-based service which support people with Alzheimer's disease and their spousal caregivers;
- to advance improvements in Minnesota's overall system of care for persons with Alzheimer's disease;
- and to better integrate the preferences and needs of people with Alzheimer's disease and their family caregivers into Minnesota's long term care system and home and community based services.

The Minnesota Board on Aging and the Alzheimer's Association Minnesota/North Dakota Chapter partnered with [Mary Mittelman, Dr. P.H.](#) and Cynthia Epstein, from New York University's Silberstein Aging & Dementia Research Center.

According to Dr. Mittelman, developer of the NYU Caregiver Intervention "We know that this intervention has been demonstrated to lessen caregiver depression and burden, as well as delay nursing home placement of individuals with dementia an average of 18 months." Mittelman adds, "It's gratifying to see this intervention helping caregivers on such a large scale in Minnesota."

The success of this pilot project led to expansion funding of the NYUCI through the Administration on Aging, which will include the continuation of the current sites and expansion to four additional sites statewide. More than 250 spousal caregivers and their families will participate in this intervention.

Members of the NYUCI Project Team were honored at the RCI Awards Banquet on October 23. Team members who were on hand to receive the award and \$10,000 check in Americus were: Donna Walberg, Minnesota Alzheimer's Demonstration Project; Cynthia Epstein, NYU's Silberstein Aging and Dementia Research Center; Kristine Dwyer, Caregiver Consultant, Carlton County Public Health; Dr. Mary Mittelman, Program Developer, NYU's Silberstein Aging and Dementia Research Center.

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Members of the REACH VA Project Team recently received a statuette and a \$10,000 check from Mrs. Rosalynn Carter at the 2008 RCI Awards Banquet in Americus, Georgia. The \$10,000 will help fund the continuation of the project. Pictured (l to r): Jennifer Martindale-Adams, Ed.D, Memphis VA Medical Center; Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter; Linda Nichols, PhD, Health Services Researcher, Memphis VA Medical Center.



Members of the NYUCI Project Team recently received a statuette and a \$10,000 check from Mrs. Rosalynn Carter at the 2008 RCI Awards Banquet in Americus, Georgia. The \$10,000 will help fund the project's expansion in Minnesota. Pictured (l to r): Donna Walberg, Minnesota Alzheimer's Demonstration Project; Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter; Cynthia Epstein, NYU's Silberstein Aging and Dementia Research Center; Kristine Dwyer, Caregiver Consultant, Carlton County Public Health; Dr. Mary Mittelman, Program Developer, NYU's Silberstein Aging and Dementia Research Center.