

GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY NEWS RELEASE

Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving Supports Effort to Raise Awareness about Needs of Military Caregivers

Dole Foundation campaign calls for programs like Operation Family Caregiver

AMERICUS, GEORGIA (May 20, 2015) — Leisa Easom, Ph.D., executive director of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, issued today the following statement of support for the Hidden Heroes Coalition Summit:

“The Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving (RCI) commends the Elizabeth Dole Foundation for its commitment to military caregivers. The Dole Foundation’s effort to bring more attention to the needs of our military families has had a huge impact on those of us that work with those families. At RCI, we have seen clearly the increased skills, confidence, and peace of mind we can provide caregivers through Operation Family Caregiver’s (OFC) training, and we have benefited greatly from raised awareness of the issues surrounding military caregiving among the communities we serve around the nation. In addition, we appreciate the Foundation’s ability to galvanize resources and coordinate the many organizations working in this field so that our work complements each other.

RCI has worked closely over the past few years with the families of service members returning from war through our innovative program, Operation Family Caregiver (www.operationfamilycaregiver.org). Last year’s report from the RAND Corporation, funded by the Dole Foundation, called for services to help empower caregivers to better cope with the stress and strain of caregiving. We could not agree more, which is why we launched OFC in 2012 with the generous support of Johnson & Johnson.

OFC is currently serving more than 100 caregivers in person at seven sites and via Skype. It is an evidence-based and personalized program, tailored specifically to the struggles of each family. Caregivers who have completed the program are more satisfied with their lives, report fewer health issues, and are generally more prepared to take care of their families.

We again thank the Elizabeth Dole Foundation for its important attention to this hidden population. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with the Foundation and many others whose work supports our service members to ensure that military families are honored for the heroic work they are doing on behalf of our great nation.”

About the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving

Located in Americus, Ga., the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving is a division of Georgia Southwestern State University. The RCI was established in 1987 in honor of former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, a GSW alumna who serves as president of the Institute's Board of Advisors. RCI establishes local, state, national, and international partnerships committed to building quality, long-

term, home and community-based services. It advocates for evidence-based research to address the strain and burdens associated with family, volunteer, and professional caregiving. In 2013, with support from Johnson & Johnson, RCI established Operation Family Caregiver, which coaches the families of newly returning service members and veterans to manage the difficulties they face when they come home.

For additional information about the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, visit www.rosalynncarter.org. For more information about Operation Family Caregiver, visit www.operationfamilycaregiver.org.

###