



INTERNATIONAL LONGEVITY CENTER - USA

Contact:

Megan McIntyre
Director of Communications
212-606-3380, meganm@ilcusa.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Caregiving Project Launched with Million Dollar Challenge Grant

International Longevity Center Announces “The Caregiving Project for Older Americans.”

NEW YORK (May 22, 2006)— Efforts to solve the nation’s urgent caregiving crisis got a boost this week with the announcement of a national project aimed at improved training and standards for caregivers serving older people.

The International Longevity Center-USA (ILC-USA), in partnership with the Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education (SCSHE), have been awarded a \$1,000,000 challenge grant from the Schmieding Foundation of Springdale, Arkansas, launching a multi-year project, “The Caregiving Project for Older Americans.”

“As the American population grows older, the need for caregivers to assist older persons in their daily lives, both at home and in institutions, grows more urgent,” says Dr. Robert Butler, president and CEO of the ILC-USA.

In a joint venture, the ILC-USA and SCSHE aim to bring greater awareness of the caregiving crisis, develop a national systemic approach to recruiting, training and retaining paid professional caregivers, and enhance the key role of this new generation of caregivers.

“In the face of a massive national shortage of caregivers, the available work force is often poorly trained and underpaid,” says Dr. Larry Wright, Director of SCSHE. “The lack of formal training, standards of care and an agreed upon curriculum both undermines and potentially harms those in need.”

While the ILC-SCSHE project joins other efforts in the field, its emphasis is on the creation and testing of a national caregiving curriculum, creation of a set of standards for caregivers and those supervising them and eventually the creation of a national organization for professional caregivers.

With the generous assistance of a challenge grant of \$1 million dollars from the Schmieding Foundation, ILC-USA and SCSHE will immediately begin the work for this three-year project, assuming an annual budget of \$1.4 million per year or \$4.2 million over the three years.

Lawrence H. Schmieding, an agribusiness leader and benefactor to the SCSHE, has championed better caregiving services for older persons, beginning when his older brother became ill. Schmieding is especially enthusiastic about better quality in-home care, believing that “when a person is at home, there is hope.”

Dr. Butler and Dr. Wright will oversee the project. While curriculum development remains the main goal of the project, the first year will be devoted to raising national awareness of the problem and several activities including:

- issue a comprehensive report on the state of caregiving today;
- organize a high level expert advisory committee on caregiving;
- hold a summit meeting of caregiving leaders to discuss the findings and suggest solutions for the growing crisis.

Dr. Wright and the staff of SCSHE have already pioneered curricula and educational materials for the professional and family caregiving community in northwest Arkansas. “This project allows us to take our work to a national level as we collaborate with our colleagues at the ILC-USA,” says Dr. Wright. “What we really need is respect for the caregiver and a career ladder that makes this a valued profession for those who devote themselves to the care of others.”

The **International Longevity Center-USA** (ILC-USA) is a research policy organization in New York City and has sister centers in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. Led by Dr. Robert N. Butler, a world renowned physician specializing in geriatrics, the Center is a non-for-profit, non-partisan organization with a staff of economists, medical and health researchers, demographers and others who study the impact of population aging on society.

The ILC-USA focuses on combating ageism, healthy aging, productive engagement and the financing of old age. The ILC-USA is an independent affiliate of Mount Sinai School of Medicine and is incorporated as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) entity. More information on the ILC-USA can be found at www.ilcusa.org

The **Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education of Northwest Arkansas (SCSHE)**, located in Springdale, Arkansas, provides older adults and their families with education, healthcare, information resources and other services for more positive aging. Education services include unique in-home caregiver training programs, public programs on positive aging, and professional programs to improve the geriatric expertise of healthcare professionals and students. Healthcare services include comprehensive clinical care and rehabilitation by an interdisciplinary team of geriatric professionals. The Schmieding Center is a partnership of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, the Area Health Education Center-Northwest, and Northwest Health System. More information on SCSHE is available at www.schmiedingcenter.org.

###