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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wilder Foundation Launches Caregiver Awareness Campaign

Saint Paul, MN (October 10, 2011)—The number of Minnesotans aged 65 will double over the next 20 years and the vast majority of their daily needs such as grocery shopping or a ride to a doctor’s appointment will be met by family or close friends.



However, research shows that more than 80 percent of family members who are actively caring for a loved do not self-identify as a “caregiver.” This may prevent them from looking for resources that may be of help.

The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation has launched an awareness campaign in the Twin Cities to provide much needed guidance to people who help care for older adults. The “*Capacity to Care*” campaign is a series of public service advertisements and a [website](#) that provides valuable resources and information for caregivers.

The campaign was created in partnership with the Alzheimer’s Association of Minnesota/North Dakota, the Metropolitan Area on Aging, and the Minnesota Department of Human Services and is funded by generous support from The Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation.

The “*Capacity to Care*” campaign aims to:

- Increase community awareness and understanding of the strengths and challenges faced by family, friend and community caregivers;
- Build the capacity of informal caregivers to offer older adults high quality support;
- Foster connections and collaboration among family, friend and community caregivers; and
- Create stronger connections between informal caregivers and formal care systems.

The year 2011 has been named by the U.S. Administration on Aging as the *Year of the Caregiver*. By raising awareness of the important role that caregivers play the “*Capacity to Care*” campaign seeks to increase the number of current caregivers who seek support, the number of community and family members who offer help to those providing care, and the number of future caregivers who begin preparing for their role as a caregiver before crisis strikes.

To enquire further about the “*Capacity to Care*” campaign, the Wilder Foundation’s commitment to supporting caregivers or to hear from a caregiver who has benefited from the Wilder Foundation’s services about what it means to be caregiver today, please contact:

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What is Caregiving?

In Minnesota, more than 90 percent of all care for elders is provided by family members and close friends. By 2030, twenty percent of the population will be over the age 65. The majority of these elders will be dependent on a family caregiver, but these caregivers often lack the support necessary to provide care to their loved ones without negatively impacting their own health and well-being. Caregivers suffer from high levels of stress which can impact their immune system for up to three years after their caregiving ends, thus increasing their chances of developing a chronic illness themselves.

More than 40 percent of caregivers have clinically significant symptoms of depression. Women who are caregivers are 2.5 times more likely to live in poverty and caregiving families have median incomes 15 percent lower than non-caregiving families.

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