

## **Special Assistance for Adults Preface**

Assistance for adults needing the support provided in residential care settings has evolved in North Carolina since the first rest home was opened in 1945. The NC General Assembly passed the rest home licensure law and NC became the first state in the nation to have such a law. The State Board of Public Welfare wrote and adopted the first licensure standards in 1946. Later, in 1951 the State Boarding Home Fund for the Aged and Infirm was established by the State Board of Public Welfare to assist people in paying for the cost of rest home care.

This fund evolved into State/County Special Assistance for Adults (SA) as it exists today and as established by the North Carolina General Assembly. SA qualifies under Federal law to be an Optional State Supplement. Assistance is provided to individuals who are eligible to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) through the Social Security Administration or to those individuals who would be eligible for SSI except for income. Recipients must be disabled according to Social Security standards or age 65 or older. This program is an entitlement program to those who are eligible and live in facilities licensed to accept SA payments from their residents. SA recipients are automatically eligible for Medicaid. SA is 50% State and 50% County funded.

SA eligible facilities include adult care homes, often referred to as assisted living facilities (formerly know as rest homes or domiciliary homes). They also include family care homes, group homes for adults with developmental disabilities or mental retardation, nursing homes with adult care home beds, and licensed residential hospice facilities which have an agreement with the Division of Aging and Adult Services.

The General Assembly in 2005 approved a special enhanced rate for individuals who need the added special care services of a dementia unit. These individuals must reside in adult care facilities which are licensed by the Division of Health Service Regulation to operate special care units for persons with dementia.

These homes are a major component of the long-term care system in North Carolina. When elderly and disabled adults are no longer able to continue living at home and residential care is needed, adult care homes are primary sources of care for these individuals.

The rates also have changed significantly. In 1954 the boarding home rate was \$130 per month with \$5 for clothing and \$10 for special medical needs (prior to Medicaid). In January 2009, the rate will increase to \$1,207. The personal needs allowance is now \$46, and Medicaid reimburses the facilities for Basic Personal Care Services and additional amounts for heavy care residents who need extensive or total assistance with eating, toileting, and/or ambulation. Medicaid rates can be found on the Division of Medical Assistance website at <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dma/fee/fee.htm>. Medicaid also pays for health care needs of SA recipients including physician services, hospitalization, prescription drugs, home health care, etc. The SA budget for 2007-2008 topped \$148 million with over 30,000 recipients. Almost half of SA recipients are also SSI recipients. SA recipients pay approximately \$230 million from their own resources (RSDI, SSI, pensions, etc.) for care in adult care homes.

This policy manual for State/County Special Assistance for Adults provides the legal basis and state regulations and guidelines needed to carryout the program. It is based on State legislation enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly, Administrative Procedures Act (APA) rules adopted by the NC Social Services Commission, and Federal laws and regulations that govern optional state supplement programs. The SA Manual was completely revised in 2002 by the SA Manual Revision Core and Cluster Groups and the NC FAST SA Policy Simplification Team, all of which had joint County DSS and NC Division of Social Services participation. The Division of Social Services and the Economic Services Committee approved it. The Manual is updated by SA staff within the Division of Aging and Adult Services.