

# Spousal Care Program Expands

In February 2000, after a long fight to save the Spousal Care program, a fight which was organized by our union and led by spousal caregivers throughout the state, the Legislature voted to reinstate the program after slashing it during the previous legislative session.

It was a bittersweet victory because the Legislature capped the

number of couples who could be on the program at one time to 198.

Legislators also directed the Seniors and People with Disabilities agency directors to pursue approval from the federal government to expand Medicaid waivers to allow spousal caregivers to receive federal matching funds rather than having the program completely funded out of Oregon tax revenues.



For more than five years spousal caregivers have stood together to fight for dignity and respect for their families. Their courage is the foundation for this victory.

## Here's the Good News

We just received word that the spousal care program has been approved by the federal Medicaid agency and in January, SPD opened the spousal care program to any couple who meet eligibility, without a cap on the number who can be enrolled at one time.

If you or someone you know might be eligible for the spousal care program, tell them to contact their local branch office to apply.

To all the spousal caregivers and their loved ones who stood together in 2000 and fought back against a decision that threatened to tear families apart, congratulations. Your efforts have paved the way for those who will benefit from this expansion in the years to come. And to SPD officials who have worked diligently to gain federal approval, thank you as well.



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