§ 206. Informal caregiver training. 1. The director is hereby authorized and directed, to the extent appropriations are available therefor, to develop, establish and operate training and technical assistance programs, including caregiver resource centers, caregiver networks, and other support activities, for informal caregivers throughout the state for the purposes of assisting such caregivers and improving the quality of care provided to frail and disabled persons. The director shall also make available and encourage the utilization of such training programs in consultation with the commissioner of health, the commissioner of the office of children and family services, the commissioner of mental health, and the commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities.

2. Definitions. For the purposes of this section: (a) "Informal caregiver" shall mean the family member or other natural person who normally provides the daily care or supervision of a frail or disabled person, or any family member or other natural person who contributes to and is involved in the caretaking responsibilities for such frail or disabled person. Such informal caregiver may, but need not, reside in the same household as the frail or disabled person.

(b) "Frail or disabled person" shall mean any person who is unable to attend to his or her daily needs without the assistance or regular supervision of an informal caregiver due to mental or physical impairment. Such definition shall not exclude persons under eighteen years of age who suffer from mental or physical impairment.

(c) "Program" shall mean the program of informal caregiver training and technical assistance established by this section.

(d) "Caregiver resource center" shall mean a project funded pursuant to this section which provides services and activities which are responsive to the needs and contracts of informal caregivers in regard to their caregiving responsibilities.

(e) "Caregiver networks" shall mean local coalitions which develop, coordinate, and implement action plans to identify and mobilize resources to address the unmet needs of frail and disabled persons and their caregivers.

3. (a) The duties of the director pursuant to this section shall

include, but not be limited to:

(1) developing and make available or approve a curriculum for informal caregiver training which considers and is easily adapted to an array of personal needs and disabilities, and which is sensitive to ethnic and community characteristics;

(2) providing technical assistance and training to appropriate organizations and groups, including caregiver resource centers and caregiver networks, which, in turn, shall provide training and assistance to informal caregivers; and

(3) providing grants to appropriate organizations and groups, including caregiver resource centers and caregiver networks, to develop and make available approved curricula for informal caregiver training as well as disseminate information regarding the curriculum.

(4) develop guidelines for local area agencies on aging in order to provide the following:

(i) information and assistance regarding gaining access to available services to assist informal caregivers;

(ii) resource referrals for informal caregivers regarding decision-making on behalf of the individual receiving care; and

(iii) counseling referrals for informal caregivers.

(b) Training and technical assistance shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) knowledge of major health problems and diseases, mental and physical disabilities, and the aging process;

(2) practical skills required in providing personal care and support;

(3) stress awareness and methods of dealing with stress caused by providing care;

(4) financial management; and

(5) identification and utilization of available resources, including benefits, entitlements, and other programs and assistance.

4. The director shall:

(a) Promulgate any rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

(b) On or before the first day of January every other year, submit a report to the governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly, which shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) a financial report of the program's operation;

(2) a profile of persons or groups receiving training and technical assistance pursuant to this section; and

(3) an analysis of the program's success in assisting informal caregivers and improving the quality of care provided by such persons.