



**OPERATION  
FAMILY CAREGIVER**

A program of the Rosalynn Carter  
Institute for Caregiving



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## **Press Release**

### **Easterseals Washington selected as new Operation Family Caregiver site in Washington State**

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON (Nov. 1, 2016) — The [Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving's](#) (RCI) signature military caregiver program, Operation Family Caregiver, today announced that Easterseals Washington will operate its new site in Washington State. The [Bob Woodruff Foundation](#) committed to fund the site during the OFC Summit held at the Carter Center in the July.

[Easterseals Washington](#) has been serving children and adults with disabilities across Washington State as a stand-alone non-profit organization since 1947. As an Operation Family Caregiver affiliate, Easterseals Washington will provide individualized skill-building support to 40 military caregivers residing in Washington State. Using the evidence-based metrics created by the RCI, each of these military caregivers will complete the Operation Family Caregiver Program within 4-6 months.

"We are honored to be trusted with the delivery of this important program," stated Cathy Bisailon, Easterseals Washington President and CEO. "While we have provided support services for military and veteran personnel, the Rosalynn Carter Institute's evidence-based approach will allow us to make life-improving impact in the lives of these families throughout Washington State."

[Operation Family Caregiver](#) (OFC) is a proven, evidence-based program that provides support to the families of newly returning service members and veterans. Specially-trained coaches teach military families the skills they need to overcome unforeseen challenges and cope more effectively with problems they never imagined. Caregivers who have completed the program report being less depressed and more satisfied with their lives, have fewer health complaints, and are generally more prepared to take care of their families. Since its launch with catalytic funding from Johnson & Johnson in 2012, OFC has helped more than 300 caregivers from across the country.

"It is hard to imagine how difficult it is to be a husband or wife, or a parent, or even a friend, whose loved one comes home from war simply unrecognizable. He or she takes on this new role of 'caregiver'—but also needs to adapt to how his or her own life has changed," said RCI's executive director Dr. Leisa Easom. "As OFC extends into new communities, we can see the lasting impact it is having on military families."

"It's clear that Operation Family Caregiver is improving the quality of life for military and veteran families, and that is our mission as well," said Mary Carstensen, acting Director of Programs and Partnerships for the Bob Woodruff Foundation. "We are proud to bring the program to the state of Washington, home to many who have served and continue to serve our nation."

After an initial pilot launch in 2012, the program has expanded in each subsequent year. It can be provided in person or via Skype. Over the past three years, RCI has pursued a deliberate plan to extend OFC into states with the highest concentration of post-9/11 veterans, active military, and guard/reserve. With the latest expansion, OFC will be serving military families in [14 locations](#), including the nine U.S. states with the greatest need.

All OFC sites are managed by local organizations that have been trained by RCI staff. Easterseals' Washington's selection as the newest OFC site came as the result of a grant request submitted following the OFC Summit held in July.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.easterseals.com/washington/ofc>.

### ***About Easterseals Washington***

Easterseals Washington has been helping individuals with disabilities and their families, live better lives for 70 years. Whether helping someone simply gain greater independence for everyday living or secure employment, Easterseals Washington offers a variety of services to help people with disabilities address life's challenges and achieve personal goals. Our purpose is to change the way the world defines and views disabilities by making profound, positive differences in people's lives every day.

Easterseals Washington serves more than 4,100 adults and children with disabilities and their families annually through eleven offices and program sites. Find more information about how we are challenging America to recognize the new face of disability by redefining disability for the 21st century at <http://www.easterseals.com/washington/>.

### ***About the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving***

Located in Americus, Ga., the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving is a division of Georgia Southwestern State University. RCI was established in 1987 in honor of former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, a GSW alumna who serves as president of the Institute's Board of Advisors. RCI supports family and professional caregivers through advocacy, education, research, and service. In 2012, with support from Johnson & Johnson, RCI established Operation Family Caregiver, which coaches the families of newly returning service members and veterans to manage the difficulties they face when their loved one returns home.

*For additional information about the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, visit [www.rosalynncarter.org](http://www.rosalynncarter.org). For more information about Operation Family Caregiver, visit [www.operationfamilycaregiver.org](http://www.operationfamilycaregiver.org).*

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