

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2020

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**Department of Elder Affairs Announces Collier County
as New Dementia-Caring Community**

TALLAHASSEE – Today, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) announced Collier County has joined the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) as the 15th DCCI Task Force and Dementia-Caring Community in Florida. DCCI implements a statewide effort to become more dementia-caring in order to support those living with dementia, their families, and their caregivers. Communities organize task forces to include professionals, advocates, and community members to increase education, awareness, and sensitivity regarding the needs of those living with dementia throughout their community.

Governor DeSantis has taken important steps to ensure individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD) get the care they deserve. Since taking office, Governor DeSantis has challenged local communities, who have not already done so, to expand DCCI in their areas to promote better care for Floridians living with dementia and support research efforts to find a cure. The DeSantis administration is committed to working diligently to improve the lives of Floridians living with ADRD.

“I share Governor DeSantis’ vision for a Florida where people can live well even after a diagnosis of dementia,” **said Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Richard Prudom.** “Being a dementia-caring community means there are now services and supports in place to make this community hospitable to someone living with dementia, their care partners, and loved ones. We want those living with dementia in Collier County to still play a vital role within their communities, and we want each interaction they have with the public to be a positive one, created out of respect and understanding. The efforts of Collier County will create stronger communities and a state that is more livable for all.”

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The Collier County DCCI Task Force is being led by executive leadership of the Naples Senior Center at the Jewish Family and Community Services of Southwest Florida (JFCS).

“With an estimated 580,000 individuals in Florida living with Alzheimer’s and the increase in the numbers of seniors projected through 2040 in Collier County, there could not be a better time to focus on individuals and families who are affected by those living with dementia,” **said Dr. Jaclynn Faffer, President and CEO of the Naples Senior Center at JFCS.** “Working together, we can all support the vision of providing a better quality of life for those with dementia, their families, and their caregivers. I am honored to chair the Collier DCCI Task Force.”

There are more than 15,000 individuals living with probable Alzheimer’s disease—the most prevalent and well-known form of dementia—in Collier County, and these figures do not include other forms of dementia, nor do they include the thousands of families and caregivers affected by the disease.

“Bringing DCCI to Collier County has been a passion of mine for several years,” **said Tammy DeCaro, the Executive Director of Barrington Terrace.** “We are so excited to launch this vital program here in our community to provide Collier County residents with information, support, and access to services for those living with ADRD. As Executive Director of Barrington Terrace, I am proud to serve alongside Dr. Faffer in uniting community leaders with one common goal – making Collier County a Dementia-Caring Community.”

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About the Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the State Unit on Aging, helps Florida’s elders to remain healthy, safe, and independent. The Department provides most direct services through its Division of Statewide Community-Based Services, which works through the state’s eleven Area Agencies on Aging and local service providers to deliver essential services to a vital segment of the population. For more information, please visit www.elderaffairs.org.

