

Developing a New and Better Long-term Care System in New York

As part of its white paper on developing a better long-term care (LTC) system in New York state, the Long-Term Care Community Coalition (LTCCC) included many issues of importance to the elderly population in the assisted living (AL) setting. We have focused this summary on those points applicable to this population and setting. The Web site for the full report is provided at the end of the article.

Guiding Principles for Building a Better Long-term Care (LTC) System

- The consumer, informal caregiver, and formal caregiver must be involved in the process of planning for the consumer's LTC. All should be empowered and valued although the consumer must have the primary role in directing his or her care when able.
- The system must focus on understanding the whole person, both physically and psychologically, and offer care tailored to each individual's strengths, needs, and preferences. Consumers of LTC services are not simply medical diagnoses—they are whole human beings made up of things they do well and things they can no longer do. The system must build on strengths as it deals with needs.
- Consumers must have the right to “age in place.” While some adult homes meet the definition of community setting, many do



not and are institutions. These adult homes should not be considered “remaining in one's own community.”

- Housing options must be available for those who want to remain in their own community. Consumers must have adequate and appropriate options of where to receive services and by whom. Consumers must have culturally competent LTC services.
- Formal caregivers must be recognized for their central role in providing services. We cannot shape an effective LTC system without a well-equipped workforce to sustain it.

Recommendations for Building a Better LTC System

- Guarantee seamless access to

service options across all LTC systems. The “Single Point of Entry for Long-term Care” (POE) that is now being developed by New York State is a beginning.

- Develop consumer-friendly resources, specifically tailored to the needs of diverse populations.
- Redesign care and service planning to ensure there are adequate number of case (care) managers/social workers to help consumers analyze their needs and preferences.
- Develop a process that includes regular care management meetings with consumers and informal and formal caregivers to evaluate service plans and provide individualized care planning.
- Ensure that consumers have adequate numbers of housing and

- service options to choose from. Conduct an assessment of housing needs that includes an estimate of how many people are waiting for housing and how many currently institutionalized individuals want to move to a noninstitutional setting.
- Focus on housing preservation by giving incentives to help preserve existing housing.
 - Encourage incentives and innovative funding streams to develop accessible housing.
 - Ensure that housing is designed appropriately by:
 - Focusing on accessibility and accident prevention
 - Providing help for activities of daily living (ADLs) and health care
 - Providing medication management
 - Limiting size of housing
 - Providing end-of-life services
 - Ensuring that housing is permanent if the consumer can and wants to remain
 - Ensuring that housing is available in all communities.
 - Using new technologies to make housing safe and accessible
 - Encouraging consumer independence and autonomy
 - Discouraging institutional models
 - Encouraging public/private partnerships to facilitate the expansion and design of housing and home- and community-based service options
 - Ensure cultural competency by:
 - Considering where and how different cultures get their information
 - Mandating that the language of the consumer is used by professionals (use interpreters or when not possible, ensure access to translation services)
 - Considering how to engage people of different cultures
 - Considering how to assess the healthcare needs of people of different cultures

- Encouraging a culturally competent workforce through culture training and increasing awareness of specific cultural needs
- Increasing the numbers of linguistically and culturally competent professionals by encouraging diversity of different cultures, ethnic and racial backgrounds, in supervisory, governance, and management roles
- Encouraging communication between consumers and workforce in terms of different cultures

The system must focus on understanding the whole person, both physically and psychologically.

- Ensuring that LTC policy reflects the needs of future immigrants
- Encourage aging in place by:
 - Developing supports for consumers to remain integrated
 - Developing quality mental health and health services to be given in the community setting
- Encourage flexible scheduling in the workplace.
- Combat isolation by developing meaningful community activities for residents.

Financing a Better LTC System

- Maintain provider rates that are appropriate and revisit them on a regular basis.
- Evaluate worker wages and benefits annually.
- Develop disability rates of payment based on the complexity of the consumer's LTC needs.

Empowering and Increasing a Well-trained Workforce

- Collect data annually on:
 - Shortages in different parts of the state
 - Retention and turnover rates
 - Barriers to work in LTC
 - Reasons why potential workers want to work in LTC
- Encourage a better screening system for employers, making sure potential workers understand the responsibilities and opportunities of the position.
- Develop roles for and encourage older adults to join the workforce.
- Redirect Health Care Reform Act (HCRA) funds to go to providers who can demonstrate they can retain workers and workers are a major part of the service. Use funds for:
 - Adult learner training
 - Supervision training
 - Career ladders
 - Empowering staff through decision-making roles
 - Helping staff access other services (such as child care or housing) to ensure full-time work.
- Increase wages and benefits to make sure workers have a living wage.
- Encourage better training for supervisors.
- Consider the use of the “universal” worker.
- Remove barriers to getting formal caregivers from other countries.
- Develop training on consumer-directed care and encourage professional education, especially concerning mental health needs, communication with consumers and informal caregivers, cultural competency, Alzheimer/dementia care, and other specific conditions and diseases that are prevalent in the LTC population.

Improving Quality of Care

- Take responsibility for the mental health needs of people in LTC.
- Provide funding to hire trained

and experience inspectors and supervisors.

- Increase consumer participation in state inspection and monitoring programs.
- Encourage “culture change” projects that have support from management with grants that are open to all stakeholders, demonstrate meaningful outcomes, and can be sustained.

Long-term Care Compact

- The proposed legislation for a LTC Compact Subsidy in New York gives chronically ill senior citizens the option of investing their assets towards the cost of their LTC.
- The proposal essentially privatizes LTC for a portion of the population.
- Under the current proposal, participants who take part in the Compact will pay upfront a “pledge” of either \$300,000 (the approximated cost of a 3-year

LTC stay) or up to ½ their assets, whichever is less.

- Concerns include (among others):
 - Do we want to privatize a substantial portion of LTC?
 - What is the impact of this type of privatization in terms of real costs and quality of care and choice for consumers?
 - Will we limit LTC to financially well-off consumers?

Managed LTC Program

- The managed LTC program of New York must make clear that protecting the health and well-being of program participants who are often frail, functionally disabled, and vulnerable is the primary consideration of its implementation.
- If implemented carefully, thoughtfully, and with appropriate respect for the dignity and autonomy of the patient, managed LTC plans can improve care through development of coordinated serv-

ices, more efficient use of resources, increased emphasis on preventive and community-based care, and strict provider accountability for quality.

A Holistic Approach to Care Is More Efficient

LTC should holistically address the whole person; it should place him or her in a position of power when determining a course of action. Such a system is more likely to have positive outcomes and satisfied consumers. Effective systems and satisfied consumers are not mutually exclusive. A comprehensive approach, implementing the suggested recommendations above, can save money. ALC

The white paper from which this summary is taken was prepared by the Long Term Care Community Coalition (LTCCC) (www.ltccc.org). The entire white paper can be found at: www.ltccc.org/documents/WhitePaperFinal-corrected.pdf

Calendar of Events



Meeting Organizer Conference Name	Dates and Location	Contact Information
Pri-Med Midwest	April 25-28 Rosemont, IL	http://pri-med.com/pmo/LiveProgramDetail.aspx?EventCode=10MDW07A
American Geriatrics Society (AGS) 2007 Annual Scientific Meeting	May 2-6 Seattle, WA	www.americangeriatrics.org/news/meeting/index.shtml 212-308-1414
The Assisted Living Federation of America (ALFA) 2007 Conference & Expo	May 15-17 Dallas, TX	www.alfaconferenceandexpo.com/index.shtml
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) Geriatrics '07	May 21-23 Hollywood, FL	www.ascp.com/education/meetings/2007/midyear/
American Academy of Physician Assistants 35 th Annual Physician Assistants Conference	May 26-31 Philadelphia, PA	www.aapa.org/annual-conf/index.html 703-836-2272
Alzheimer's Association 2 nd International Conf. on Prevention of Dementia	June 9-12 Washington, DC	www.alz.org/preventionconference/pc2007/overview.asp
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners 2007 National Conference	June 20-24 Indianapolis, IN	www.aanp.org/Conferences/2007+Conference/2007+Conference.asp
National Association of Directors of Nursing Administration/Long Term Care (NADONA/LTC)	June 23-27 Las Vegas, NV	www.nadona.org 800-222-0539
National Institute on Aging Summer Institute on Aging Research	July 14-20 Queenstown, MD	www.nia.nih.gov/GrantsAndTraining/FundingOpportunities/SummerInstitute2007.htm
National Conference of Gerontological Nurse Practitioners Annual Educational Conference	September 13-15 San Diego, CA	www.ncgnp.org/ 800-222-0539