

## Long Term Care Restructuring Initiatives in California

### Preventing or Delaying Long Term Care:

- The state provides care coordination for individuals with chronic conditions who are seriously ill. The goal of the state's program is to enhance the coordination of care, improve health outcomes, and decrease the long-term costs of chronically ill populations by using a holistic approach. Interventions will include intensive case management and disease management strategies including: referrals to improve mobility and provide needed financial and social support, disease self-management education, development of individualized care plans and promotion of the use of disease/patient registries to share data.

### Improving Access to Home and Community Based Services:

- California is conducting a \$3 million dollar study to be completed by 2011 by the California Community Choices Program. The group is made up of consumer and non-consumer stakeholders. The project has 3 major goals:
  - Improved access to Long Term Care support services.
  - Transformation of Information Technology.
  - Create a system that effectively manages funding for LTC support services and promotes community living options.

### Developing Single Point of Entry:

- The Community Choices program has completed the [CalCareNet.ca.gov](http://CalCareNet.ca.gov) website. The site provides and gathers information on long term care services in specific areas. CalCareNet brings together a range of California services into one place so people can learn what is available and more easily find and access those services. The site also uses a survey to gather information on how users find the website. The goal of the data is to improve the single point of entry system to long term care services.

### Encouraging Home Care:

- The state has increased federal funding for care giving. The Family Caregiver Support Program offers adult day, in-home, institutional respite options, counseling, education and training, information and assistance, support groups, comprehensive assessment, care management, transportation, and "supplemental services" such as: respite registry referrals, peer counseling, family consultation and meetings, friendly visiting, legal and/or financial consultation, transportation, assistive

devices, minor home modifications/repairs, homemaker services, translation/interpretation, material aid, money management, and (when needed) extended care facility placement assistance. The program is funded by the National Family Caregiver Support Program under Older Americans Act Title III E, local/county funds and voluntary contributions; administered by California Department of Aging and locally by area agencies on aging.

- The California State Plan on Aging discusses a number of goals to improve HCBS. Funding will target increasing the access to information that helps families and seniors find the resources they need to stay in the community. The plan discusses raising intergenerational (different age group) volunteerism, encouraging initiatives like finding people to mow the lawns or assist with general home projects. The plan will also try to find new ways to improve access to transportation in the community for seniors.

### **Evaluation**

A recent report (November, 2009) by Robert Mollica, Ed.D., *National Academy for State Health Policy* and Leslie Hendrickson, Ph.D., *Hendrickson Development*, found many issues that needed improvement and gives 28 recommendations for improving access to California's Home and Community Based Long Term Care. Among the findings:

- California lacks a strategic plan that would set priorities for services for the future to maximize the use of finite resources.
- New programs often require a new delivery system because there is no logical infrastructure or single entry point to administer new programs. Consumers admitted to a nursing facility do not have access to a central source of information, preadmission screening, or assistance and support to access community service options. Consumers living in the community who need assistance do not have access to options counseling to understand what services might be available to them as better alternatives to admission to an institution.
- The state's budget deficit makes consideration of changes that require investment in services or the delivery system more difficult in the short term. However, investments in HCBS programs would likely improve the effectiveness of the overall delivery system and reduce the rate of growth by shifting more resources to community services.

- Collaboration between community service organizations and hospital discharge planners to divert admissions to nursing facilities is not well developed.
- Previous reports recommended consolidation of agencies and programs serving individuals with disabilities and older adults. However, each program and agency has a long and rich tradition with a strong network of providers, advocates and consumers that seem more comfortable with the system they know, than a new, untested structure that is not clearly defined.

Among the report's recommendations are for California to:

- Define goals for balancing the long-term care system
- Reduce the rate of growth in spending on institutional care
- Expand HCBS programs over time as the economy recovers and state revenues increase
- Invest savings from a lower rate of institutional growth in home and community-based services for individuals who are at risk of entering an institution
- Improve the management of home and community services programs

CalCareNet, California's single point of entry has recently been launched. Evaluations on the effectiveness of the website are continuing. Preliminary studies show that users of the CalCareNet system were generally pleased with the service. Several testers had concerns of a technical nature, which CalCareNet is addressing. The evaluation was conducted with selected users including those with varying disabilities, caregivers, service providers, people using screen readers, and individuals that are unfamiliar with long term care services and supports. After all the preliminary tests were compiled, the comments and changes were incorporated into the website before its launch on June 10, 2009.

A report (2006) on California's Family Caregiver Support Program was prepared by the Center for the Advanced Study of Aging Services at the

University of California, Berkeley. Overall, the findings were positive. An increase in service use was found, as well as a decrease in unmet needs and caregiver distress. However, the study did find that 20% of those surveyed never used a caregiver support service. Two-thirds of caregivers reported not receiving at least one type of service that they needed, and one-third identified barriers to service use. Language barriers, lack of services offered by similar people, and lack of time were found to be some of the barriers.

### **Conclusion**

California's initiatives show promise by creating an accessible and evolving single point of entry system for families and seniors in need of services. Focusing on helping people stay out of nursing homes by connecting them with community based support should help seniors lead more dignified lives, with care in a home setting. However, studies indicate that much needs to be done to make these goals a reality. Continuing studies by the Community Choices program should provide important data on methods that will improve the state's long term care restructuring.

### **Resources**

[http://www.aging.ca.gov/legislation/California State Plan on Aging AoA 2009-2013 06-30-2009.pdf](http://www.aging.ca.gov/legislation/California%20State%20Plan%20on%20Aging%20AoA%202009-2013%2006-30-2009.pdf)

<http://www.aging.ca.gov/stats/default.asp>

[http://www.aging.ca.gov/stats/facts\\_and\\_program\\_narratives.asp](http://www.aging.ca.gov/stats/facts_and_program_narratives.asp)

<http://calcarenet.ca.gov/>

<http://www.communitychoices.info/>

<http://communitychoices.info/agenda.html>

[http://communitychoices.info/docs/ltc\\_study/REPORT%20Final%20PDF.pdf](http://communitychoices.info/docs/ltc_study/REPORT%20Final%20PDF.pdf)

<http://cssr.berkeley.edu/pdfs/FCSPFinalReport.pdf>

California Department of Aging

[http://www.aging.ca.gov/whatsnew/California\\_State\\_Plan\\_CDA\\_2005-2009.pdf](http://www.aging.ca.gov/whatsnew/California_State_Plan_CDA_2005-2009.pdf)

State Perspectives on Emerging Medicaid Long-Term Care Policies and Practices.

National Association of State Medicaid Directors - An Affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association. October, 2007.