

Long Term Care Restructuring Initiatives in Georgia

Encouraging Senior Friendly Communities:

Multi- Use Path System is a city program (Peachtree City) that has a unique system of paved recreational paths that are enjoyed by pedestrians, bicycles, and golf carts.

- The 90 plus mile network of paths connects neighborhoods, retail centers, churches, schools and recreation areas, using tunnels and bridges to safely cross major thoroughfares.
- Its purpose is to interconnect all areas within the city, providing opportunity for citizens to reach their destinations without automobiles.
- This program enables senior citizens who want to live in their community to enjoy a better quality of life by helping to reduce their reliance on transportation, public or private.

To date, this program has connected over 90 miles of paths. Each proposed project is placed on a list and evaluated on a yearly basis to determine which project would benefit the most people. Some projects have been phased out due to length, cost, infrastructure needs, etc. no new paths were funded in FY2008.

Offering a Greater Array of Home Based Care

The Mobile Adult Day Care Program is Georgia's concept of providing adult day care, by bringing staff to locations where people need services but there is little to no access to adult day care services.

- The program allows professional, informal and family caregivers in rural counties a period of respite.
- Mobile day care (MDC) enables rural communities to have their own day care program while "sharing" staff who travel between locations.
- The staff along with materials and supplies needed for the day is mobile. They leave from a central location to a rural site which may be located in a church or senior center. Depending on the needs of the community, the site may be open for five to eight hours per day, one to three days each week.
- A typical staff may include:

- An activity director or recreational therapist,
- The activity director's aide,
- An RN supervisor who periodically visits the MDC sites, and may supervise other programs as well,
- A case management coordinator- a social worker that assesses clients for Day Care attendance, assists families with seeking other available community resources, and conducts reassessments,
- A community development coordinator- responsibilities include public relations, trouble shooting for day center operations, and making local arrangements for educational programs. They are also responsible for developing a coalition of community professionals and caregivers that will assist in promoting the mobile daycare program, and
- An executive director and/ or administrative assistant who handles the budget, payroll, and other tasks at the central office.

The Mobile Day Care Program has encountered a number of challenges in providing this service to rural Georgia. Foremost among these challenges has been gaining the community's trust. To meet this challenge, the program fosters community involvement through the establishment of local advisory boards, hiring local individuals to work in the program, enlisting local volunteers, and selecting well-known locations in the community (such as a senior center or church) to serve as the service site. Lack of resources is a key concern for rural areas with limited funding to establish their own "bricks and mortar" respite services. By sharing staff between sites, utilizing existing facilities in the communities, and capitalizing on available resources, rural areas are able to overcome many resource barriers to provide social day care for clients with Alzheimer's and/ or other chronic diseases and respite care for their families.

Preventing or Delaying Institutionalized Long Term Care:

- Georgia has a demonstration project called Service Options Using Resources in a Community Environment (SOURCE), under its Medicaid State Plan. The program provides enhanced primary care case management for frail older adults and persons with disabilities. The goal of SOURCE is to improve health outcomes and reduce hospitalizations and emergency room visits for persons with chronic health conditions by linking primary medical care with home care services.

- The Nursing Home Diversion Modernization Grants Program is an eighteen month project (September 30, 2008- March 31, 2010) in collaboration with the Atlanta Regional Commission.
 - The goal of this program is to modernize and strengthen the Aging Services Network so that it can better help individuals who are at high risk for nursing home placement but not Medicaid eligible avoid unnecessary out of home placement by offering a wide variety of community based services and supports.
 - The grant will give seniors more choice and flexibility in obtaining services to help individuals at risk of nursing home placement receive home and community based services that enable them to continue to live in the community. The grant funds along with federal and state funds are designated to reach individuals before they have exhausted all their assets and qualify for nursing home placement under Medicaid. Consumers will have the option of using their budget to purchase assistive devices or to make home modifications to help them live independently. The Support Options program has been created to carry out the goals of the grant program.
 - Some of its methods will include:
 - Developing a tracking system to collect data for measuring performance and evaluating Support Options (a program that offers seniors an opportunity to direct his or her own care by choosing services and providers to allow him or her to stay in the home or community) and developing a quality assurance plan modeled on the CMS Quality Framework.
 - Support Options (discussed above) is a program that offers seniors an opportunity to direct his or her own care by choosing services and providers. The program also provides access to a fiscal intermediary service that assists in managing funds, including billing and disbursement activities. Support Options counselors assist seniors in the process of developing a support plan.
 - Implement and integrate the Support Options model for replication at the county and local community organization level.

- Evaluate data on the effectiveness of current assessment and consumer support plans as well as the roles and scopes of the Support Options counselors.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the Mobile Day Care Program

- This program has not been formally evaluated. However, another state, Louisiana has replicated the Mobile Day Care Program, using the Georgia program as a model. This program operates in two rural areas that previously were without day care or other respite services. The resulting demand for program services and sustained enrollment demonstrate that the program can be replicated in other states and indicate that it might be a good way to overcome the challenges of providing community based services to consumers in rural areas.
- In addition, the program was featured on the *Supporting Rural Family Caregivers* satellite broadcast in March 2008, sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services. In 2005 it also received Honorable Mention from the Archstone Foundation and the Gerontological Health Section of the American Public Health Association for Excellence in Program Innovation.

Evaluation of the Nursing Home Diversion Modernization Grants Program

- The program has yet to be evaluated because the project is not complete. There will most likely be an evaluation in the five to six months after the program has ended in 2010.

Resources

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services:

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/HCBS/04_CMSCommunications.asp.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services review of Alaska's Home and Community Based Services Waivers and Personal Care Services preliminary observations, findings and required corrective action:

http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dsds/cmsreview/AK_HCBS_Review_Preliminary_Letter_06-26-09.pdf.

Kassner, E., Reinhard, S., Fox-Grage, W., Houser, A., Accius, J., A Balancing Act: State Long-Term Care Reform, AARP Public Policy Institute. July, 2008.

Georgia Department of Human Resources:

<http://dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site/DHR/>.

The Maturing of America: Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population.

<http://hs.co.fulton.ga.us/Rapid/RapidFiles/RapidFiles/maturing%20of%20americ a.pdf>

Peachtree City Official Website: <http://www.peachtree-city.org/index.aspx?NID=154>.

Grant Helps Seniors Avoid Nursing Home Admission. Atlanta Regional Commission *Action Publication* volume 37 issue 6. November/ December 2007:

http://www.atlantaregional.com/documents/arc_action_11-12-2008.pdf.

Texas A&M University Health Science Center: School of Rural Public Health: Models for Practice Focus Area: Access to Long Term Care Services.

<http://www.srph.tamhsc.edu/centers/rhp2010/html/access/ltc/GeorgiaMobile.htm>.