

Long Term Care Restructuring Initiatives in Louisiana

Offering More Consumer Direction and Choice:

- In 2002, the state received a \$1.4 million Real Systems Transformation Grant to enable more consumer direction in Medicaid services via Medicaid Waiver programs, as well as enhance workforce development and establish pilot housing projects.
- In 2003, the state received an Independence Plus grant, which was allotted to augment the consumer direction initiatives and to create an individualized backup system for those consumers using self-direction services.

Strengthening the State Government Infrastructure:

- In 2004, the governor issued executive order 43, "Louisiana's Plan for Choice in Long Term Care." In its initial phase, an interagency team developed a Plan for Immediate Action, approved by the governor in 2005. Subsequently, in accordance with the executive order, the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) issued a report in 2007 that included work plans for accessible transportation, affordable and accessible housing, information technology and aging and adult services. In turn, the Offices of Aging and Adult Services proposed focusing its review on assisted living, self-directed service options, a single point of entry for aging services, and chronic disease management.

Encouraging Home Care and Improving Information About Long Term Care Options:

- In 2004, the state received a Rebalancing Initiative Grant to help the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities develop a transition plan in order to increase the number of consumers transitioning from institutions back into the community.
- In 2005, the state received a \$3.2 million Real Choice Systems Transformations grant intended to support the "larger long term care reform plan called for in the Governor's executive order." State officials stated that the grant should focus on three main issues: coordinating long term supports with affordable and accessible housing; designing a comprehensive quality management system; and transforming current information technology to support systems change. One of the housing initiatives undertaken thus far includes a 3,000-unit Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative for people with various disabilities, as well as the elderly. This project is also funded by Low Income Housing Tax Credits and Community Development Block Grant funds. The federal grant has also

been used to develop a housing resource website, www.LAHousingSearch.org.

- In 2007, Louisiana was awarded a five-year \$31 million grant to relocate about 760 consumers from institutional facilities back into the community to continue work on projects funded by previously allotted federal grants.
- In conjunction with the Systems Transformation grant, the state enacted several major laws relating to LTC in 2005, which included:
 1. Act 128, Senate Bill 190, which authorized a single point-of-entry system for those with developmental disabilities, requiring a needs-based assessment for anyone entering into the system, spelling out the rights and privileges of those with developmental disabilities, and creating an ombudsman program.
 2. Act 451, House Bill 697, which allows direct service workers to perform certain tasks in the home such as medication administration and provision of routine hydration and nutrition. This Act also mandates that these direct care workers be employed by licensed agencies and receive specified training.
 3. A resolution directing DHH to reorganize its program into a single office that reports to the secretary. The Office was designed to have administrative, programmatic, budgetary, and policy development authority over the complete array of Medicaid-funded long term care services for older adults and adults with disabilities.

Conclusion

- Both internal and external studies need to be conducted evaluating the effectiveness of these programs to discover if the grants and the government orders issued have assisted the state in meeting its goals of increasing consumer-direction and choice, providing greater access to LTC information and services, and encouraging home-based care.

Resources

1. http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/2008_10_ltc_la.pdf.
2. <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=14479>.