Restructuring Long Term Care: Changing Patterns and Policy Implications

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Health Policy Fellowship 2014

Abstract

The ongoing struggle to design an effective, efficient, and sustainable long-term care (LTC) system has met with significant challenges including numerous financial barriers, workforce issues, and overall quality in services provided. The purpose of this policy analysis is to address and offer recommendations and solutions to the changing patterns, policy issues and challenges associated with providing long-term care in the twenty-first century. While definitive answers and all possible considerations to achieve full comprehensive LTC reform is beyond the scope of this policy brief, it endeavors to provide context for alternative approaches and strategies to restructure LTC with focus on workforce growth, service integration/care coordination, home and community-based care programs, and concludes with long-term care recommendations for policy and practice.

Patient and family-centered care is at the forefront of health care reform and the driving force behind a changing long-term care system that meets with the “Triple Aim” for increasing access, lowering costs, and improving quality outcomes in care delivery. In preparation for changes in health care delivery the workforce must be adequately trained and educated to assume new and emerging roles that come with innovative and alternative models of care to improve efficiency and effectiveness.