

Rebalancing Long Term Care

Today, an increasing number of Americans need long-term care. Unprecedented growth in the elderly population is projected for the 21st century, and the population age 85 and older—those most in need of long-term care services—is expected to outpace the rate of growth for the entire elderly population. Long-term care is most frequently provided by family and friends at home or in a community setting, rather than in an institution. Despite this clear preference for home and community-based care, our formal long-term care system is biased toward institutionalization. Most public and private spending for long-term care still pays for institutional care. Clearly there is a need to “rebalance” the long-term care system so that there are more cost-effective choices between institutional and community options.

Long Term Care Defined

Long-term care refers to a wide-range of supportive services and assistance provided to persons who, as a result of chronic illness or frailty, are unable to be functionally independent on a daily basis. As mentioned previously, most long-term care is provided by a loved one. The care that is purchased generally consists of institutional care or home and community-based services. Institutional care is usually provided in a nursing home. Community-based care includes a variety of services such as adult day care, home health, chore services, and personal

care that are meant to help individuals to continue living in their own homes and communities

Navigating the Current Long Term Care System

Navigating the long term care system can be daunting and frustrating for older persons and their family members. The current system can be described at times as being quite disjointed and fragmented. Most states have an array of public and private long-term care programs and services delivered by a variety of state and local agencies, private nonprofit organizations and for-profit providers. Many older persons may be placed in nursing homes because they and their family members are not aware of the myriad of long term care options available, including home and community-based care.

Creating Options in Long Term Care

The Administration on Aging is working to increase the number and quality of choices available to older persons and their caregivers to meet their long term care needs. This includes the integration of health and social supports to provide a comprehensive array of community-based long term care service options. This also involves providing older persons and their caregivers easy access to information on the entire range of available service options, and assistance in making informed long term care choices.

WHAT WE DO *makes a difference*

FACT SHEET

Rebalancing Long Term Care...cont'd.

The Aging Services Network has historically played an important role in the our nation's long term care system, and that role continues to grow. The Aging Services Network has been at the forefront of creating community options and coordinated ways for older people to access information and services since the inception of the Older Americans Act in 1965. The Aging Network has build , the foundation of our formal, community-based long term care system.

President Bush recognizes the need to create more options for community care. This is a major policy goal of the President's New Freedom Initiative. The Administration is taking decisive steps to eliminate the institutional bias in our care system and is giving more focus to community care. One of the initiatives contained in the President's 2004 budget is a new program entitled the "Money Follows the Individual" Rebalancing Demonstration. Under this program, \$1.75 billion will be made available to states over the next five years to cover 100% of the cost of home and community-based waiver services for one year for individuals who transition out of

nursing homes and back to community settings.

AoA is partnering with other federal agencies, private sector organization and the Aging Network to ensure that all older Americans have every opportunity to live independently and with dignity in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. With your help, we can make a difference!

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging (AoA), works with a nationwide network of organizations and service providers to make support services and resources available to older persons and their care-givers. For more information about the AoA, please contact: **the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging**, Washington, DC 20201, Phone 202-619-0724, e-mail aoainfo@aoa.gov, Web site: www.aoa.gov

