

Quality Assurance Systems and Workforce Issues: The Case of England

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Introduction

- Ongoing quality-of-care problems in U.S. nursing homes and other long-term care providers
- Little is known about quality of care in home and community-based services
- Little is known about quality in residential care facilities, such as assisted living
- Direct care workforce is not highly trained, receives low wages and few fringe benefits

Introduction (cont.)

- Examining other countries provides an opportunity to:
 - Think “outside the box” and examine unspoken assumptions
 - Examine innovations under consideration in the United States that have been implemented in other countries
 - Highlight unique or important characteristics of the U.S. system in comparison to other countries

Overview of U.S. Quality Assurance and Workforce System

- National standards for nursing homes and home health agencies with state inspections
- State regulation for home and community-based services; home care regulation limited
- Within national government, no organizational separation between quality assurance and payment; some separation at the state level
- Nursing home inspections: annual with substantial detail, infrequent strict enforcement
- MDS and OASIS provide detailed clinical and functional information on individual consumers

Overview of U.S. Quality Assurance (cont.)

- Substantial amount of information on quality of nursing homes and home health agencies available on the Internet
- No comparable information for home care
- Individual providers responsible for training to meet minimum federal standards for CNAs and HHAs, but limited other standards
- No single organization responsible for dissemination of “best practices,” although CMS plays a major role

Overview of Long-Term Care Financing and Service Delivery in England

- In 2005, 16% of population was aged 65 and older
- “Local authorities” are responsible for administering means-tested long-term care under supervision of the national government
- National Health Service funds some long-term care, including skilled nursing portion of nursing homes, without a means test
- 42% of long-term care funding for older people and for home and community-based services
- Government-owned providers supply substantial amount of home care and institutional care

Is Quality a Problem in England?

- Yes, although it lacks the fervor of the United States
- Experts trace root causes of quality problems as:
 - Ageism and minimalist goals for older people
 - Low level of funding
 - Lack of staff and inadequate staff training
 - Ineffective regulatory system
 - Type of ownership

Regulatory Framework in England

- Labour's "third way" of achieving public goals without public ownership
- Recent national responsibility for quality assurance
- Use of quasi-governmental agencies, Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (merge into Care Quality Commission)
- Separation of quality assurance from payers
- Regulate both institutions and home and community-based services, but not consumer-directed services

Inspections and Enforcement

- Regulations are legally enforceable and must be met
- National Minimum Standards elaborate on the regulations: Ratings poor to excellent
- No MDS or OASIS
- Inspection frequency varies by quality
- Thematic inspections, such as medication management
- Experimenting with “experts by experience”
- Enforcement includes plans of correction and warning letters, but infrequent use of terminations

Nonregulatory Initiatives

- Quality information on Internet, including star-rating system:
 - Institutional and home care services
 - Individual components and summary ranking (0 to 3 stars)
 - Extremely consumer-friendly website

Nonregulatory Initiatives (cont.)

- Social Care Institute for Excellence disseminates best practices
- Very limited organizational culture change movement
- No pay-for-performance

Workforce

- 1.5 million people working in social care
- Familiar problems: Shortages, high turnover, limited training, lack of career ladder
- Stronger social protections—health insurance, unemployment insurance, vacations, holidays
- General Social Care Council
 - Set national standards for education and training of social care workers (starting with social workers)
 - Establish Codes of Conduct
 - Register workers (social workers; home care next)

Workforce (cont.)

- Skills for Care
 - Work with employers and training providers to improve workforce
 - Provide funding for training
 - Collect data on workforce

Possible Approaches for the USA?

- More national responsibility for quality assurance
- Greater separation of payment and quality assurance
- More regulatory oversight of home and community-based services
- Recognition for exceeding standards
- Great variation in frequency of inspections based on quality
- Greater involvement of people with disabilities in regulatory process
- Greater national role on regulating and training the workforce and disseminating best practices