4-5-2012

Increasing Consumer Involvement in Medicaid Nursing Facility Reimbursement: Lessons from New York and Minnesota

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### Background
- Medicaid is the main purchaser of nursing home (NH) care in the United States.
- States design their methods of reimbursing NHs to achieve desired policy objectives.
- Few consumers or resident advocates have been involved in the development or modification of state methods for reimbursing NHs.
- Lack of consumer involvement has resulted in payment systems that favor industry and government interests at the expense of issues important to residents and families.

### Study Objective
- To draw lessons for successful consumer engagement from New York and Minnesota, two states where advocates have influenced NH payment policy to better encourage access, care quality, and quality of life.

### Methods
- Data derived from archival sources and interviews with stakeholders in NY and MN.
- Twenty-four interviews were conducted with 27 individuals from 2/2/11 to 6/20/11.
- Subjects included agency officials, legislators, legislative staff, consumer advocates, union staff, and NH industry representatives.

### Methods-Continued
- Transcripts were coded to identify recurring themes and patterns in responses.
- Documents were used to cross-validate informant responses and to provide background.

### Findings

#### Prerequisites for Successful Consumer Action
- Instill reimbursement as an important issue in the organization; leadership is critical.
- Make sure you know your stuff; learn the basics, both in your state and in other states.
- Produce and disseminate knowledge through research and reports.
- Generate good will and trust by sharing information with other constituency groups.

#### Primary Strategies for Effective Consumer Action
- **Develop Relationships with Key Legislators/Staff:** Meet one-on-one; Share information; Testify at hearings; Make issues “real”/“local” by having constituents tell their stories.
- **Develop Relationships with State Officials:** Meet one-on-one; Bring otherwise non-communicating agencies together; Share information; Account for, and, perhaps, ameliorate agencies’ workload.
- **Participate in Work Groups and Taskforces:** Serve because they are important conduits for consumer input; Be assertive in promoting consumer representation on these panels.

### Findings-Continued

#### Supplemental Strategies for Consumer Action
- Issue action alerts; undertake email, phone call, and letter writing campaigns.
- Take advantage of legislative lobbying days.
- Let officials know that you have people behind you; that they should pay attention.
- Develop coalitions with other consumer groups, unions, and provider organizations, to increase the resources available for your efforts.

### Implications
*Findings suggest the importance of developing, demonstrating, and volunteering expertise as a means of gaining legitimacy, which, once earned, will lead to an ongoing role in reimbursement policy discussions. It also suggests supplementing higher-level participation in taskforce deliberations and stakeholder meetings with grassroots activities and coalition memberships that draw more widespread attention to the issue.*

### Dissemination
- Produced/distributed 5-part online seminar series and issue briefs for consumers and policymakers.
- Presented 3-hour seminar before the National Consumer Voice for Quality Care Long-Term Care.

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This work was supported by a grant (#20110033) from The Commonwealth Fund, New York, NY.