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Long-Term Services and Supports at the Georgia Health Policy Center

The Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) is at the forefront of efforts that aim to improve the lives of the aging, elderly, and disabled. GHPC conducts independent, evidence-based research and evaluation on topics that impact long-term services and supports policy, financing, and programmatic decisions. The Long-Term Services and Supports team uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of supportive services and policies.

As the baby boomer generation ages and individuals with disabilities live longer, the need for long-term services and supports grows. Central to GHPC's work in this area is working with our partners and their stakeholders to provide relevant information that assists them in meeting the needs of Georgians, using a person-centered philosophy.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide GHPC's work in the area of long-term services and supports:

- Promote a system-oriented approach to problem solving
- Provide relevant information from research, best practices, and thought leaders
- Engage and involve stakeholders in planning
- Respect the experience, dignity, and privacy of program participants, clients, and other stakeholders
- Create the right environment for important conversations
- Employ a variety of approaches to communicate findings and learnings clearly

Service Areas	Topic Areas
Policy and economic analysis	Transitioning from institutional to community care
Evaluation	Access to community-based services and resources
Meeting design and facilitation	Home care needs
Strategic planning	Caregiver support
Technical assistance	Long-term care needs
Identification of best practices	Defining caseload management
Legislative environmental scan	Screening practices and workflow

Project Examples

Money Follows the Person

The Money Follows the Person (MFP) program is a Medicaid demonstration grant awarded to the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH). The rebalancing program helps people who are living in institutions (psychiatric residential treatment facilities, nursing homes, or other long-term care facilities) return to their homes and communities, while continuing to receive supportive services.

The MFP program targets people with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities (under age 65 years), traumatic brain injury, older adults, and youth with a mental health diagnosis. Before and after transition from an institution, MFP services enable participants to pay for things not typically covered by Medicaid (security and utility deposits, furnishings and basic household items, moving costs, environmental modifications to make a home or apartment accessible, connections with peer supports, and other community services).

GHPC conducts an evaluation of the MFP program for DCH. Analysis of the program includes participant and service characteristics, as well as cost analysis, and quality-of-life surveys. Open-ended and qualitative comments are assessed and a participatory action research method known as Photovoice is used to enable MFP participants to document their own transition experience.



Georgia Medicaid Analysis of Long-Term Services and Supports

The Medicaid Policy and Business team at GHPC also supports policy and economic analysis of programs that serve older adults and people with disabilities in the state. The following are some recent Medicaid Policy and Business team projects that focused on long-term services and supports.

GHPC assisted DCH with completion of its federally mandated, state Home and Community Based Services Transition Plan. As part of this work, GHPC reviewed Georgia's home- and community-based services (HCBS) regulations and policies in light of the new federal rules. GHPC also analyzed the results of surveys of HCBS providers, case managers, and patients to assess their level of current compliance with the new federal rules.

GHPC analyzed the potential impacts of revising income limits for Georgia Medicaid for workers with disabilities (GMWD). Areas of assessment included the number of potential new Medicaid recipients, the number of potential new enrollees in GMWD, the number of people who would go to work, the budgetary impact to DCH, and the macroeconomic impact to the state.



The Atlanta Regional Commission's Health & Aging Strategic Plan

The Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC's) Live Beyond Expectations Initiative aimed to create a strategic plan for the 10-county Metro Atlanta region that provides sustainable funding to support community-based aging services. The long-range vision of this initiative is increased reach, relevance, and resources for aging services in the Atlanta region that support older adults' independence, quality of life, and aging in place.

On behalf of ARC, GHPC designed and facilitated a series of community meetings and a summit to gather feedback on the strategic plan. The five Community Conversation sessions engaged nearly 350 older adults, caregivers, and organizational representatives. Additional input for ARC's plan was sought through an online survey. Findings were presented at the Live Beyond Expectations Summit, a full-day meeting attracting 300 multisector stakeholders.

In addition to the Community Conversation findings, the summit was designed to share data about aging in the Metro Atlanta region and to learn about innovations in service provision. Through these activities, the summit affirmed the information collected through the conversations, refined it, and built momentum for ARC's strategic plan.

