

GEORGIA -- 2001 Nursing Facility Transitions State Grant

Identified Problems with the State's Long-Term Care System

- A disproportionate share of available funding is spent on nursing home care.
- Current regulatory and funding constraints prevent and/or discourage nursing facilities from offering additional community-integration options.
- Home- and community-based services (HCBS) programs often have redundant and/or conflicting enrollment processes, operating policies, and procedures in part because multiple agencies are responsible for HCBS programs.
- Many individuals living in Georgia's nursing homes and other institutions are unaware of alternatives to institutional living.
- HCBS programs have substantial waiting lists.
- Shortage of non-physician healthcare workers.
- A lack of funding for furniture and household items, transportation, deposits on household utilities and rent, an initial supply of groceries, and modifications to the home often prevent transition.

Perceived Strengths

- Georgia's elected leadership has a great deal of sensitivity to the need for cost-effective home and community service options.
- An Olmstead Planning Committee, established by the governor, guides the Departments of Human Resources and Community Health in developing a set of recommended action plans for implementation by the state. The committee consists of providers, families, consumers, and advocates.
- Advocacy and service provider communities in Georgia tend to share the values of consumer empowerment and self-advocacy.

Primary Focus of Grant Activities

- Establish a Consumer/Provider Task Force to develop and prioritize strategies to overcome institutional bias in state policy.
- Conduct a community resource mapping projects in each of the 18 counties in the pilot areas to identify service gaps and opportunities for expanding service capacity.
- Relocate 24 nursing home residents to the community.
- Implement initiatives to increase community services and direct care workers, including regional community service worker registries, monthly newsletters, and develop training programs to meet local needs.

Goals, Objectives, and Activities

Overall Goal. Build state capacity to support the transition of people residing in nursing homes to a community-integrated living arrangement, and to sustain long-term residence and participation in the community.

Goal. Establish a Georgia Consumer/Provider Task Force to facilitate policy changes addressing system improvement.

Objectives/Activities

- Establish a Georgia Consumer/Provider Task Force.
- Identify existing policy barriers to the development of community support services.
- Review best practices relating to consumer/provider collaboration in removing barriers to nursing home transition, including a minimum of one site visit.
- Facilitate relevant policy modifications.

Goal. Facilitate up to 24 individuals' transition to appropriate community-integrated living arrangements.

Objectives/Activities

- Conduct pilot projects in the 14-county south central Georgia service area of the Golden Age SOURCE Project and the 4-county north Georgia service area of the United Health Services SOURCE Project.
- A Transition Planning Team (TPT)—consisting of the organization's Social Worker from Golden Age and United Health Services, SOURCE Program Case Manager, an Independent Living Center (ILC) Regional Peer Transition Leader and a patient advocate from the region's Area Agency on Aging (AAA)—will identify transition candidates based on a review of the existing care plans of Medicaid-eligible nursing home residents in the pilot service areas.
- The TPT will distribute an informational booklet "Home and Community Services—A Guide to Medicaid Waiver Programs in Georgia" and will discuss the feasibility of participating in the transition project with every nursing home resident and their family.
- The TPT will develop a person-centered care plan for interested residents to facilitate their transition, and enroll these residents in the SOURCE program.
- Establish a referral system between the Golden Age and United Health Services' long-term care nursing facilities and the areas' ILCs and AAAs.
- Use grant funds as necessary to pay for support services not covered by Medicaid or Medicare.

Goal. Build the capacity of providers of nursing home services in Georgia to offer community support services.

Objectives/Activities

- Conduct county-level Community Resource Mapping in each of the 18 counties in the pilot projects to identify existing providers, service gaps, and opportunities for expanding the existing providers' service capacity.

- Strengthen and/or establish community partnerships between the providers of nursing home services in the pilot and other community resources in order to provide additional community support options.
- Share evaluation information at a minimum of 25 meetings/conventions to encourage transitions in other geographic areas of the state.

Goal. Increase the number of trained and reliable quality community service workers.

Objectives/Activities

- Hire a Regional Workforce Development Coordinator in each of the two pilot site regions.
- Identify local barriers to recruiting and retaining an adequate health care workforce working in community-integrated settings.
- Work with consumer advocates, local health care and social services providers, education providers, other interested community resources, and state agencies to overcome identified barriers, and to offer relevant local training programs in the pilot sites.
- Establish a regional community service worker registry and monthly newsletter containing relevant workforce information to interested consumers and providers in each of the two pilot site regions.
- Share evaluation information at a minimum of 25 meetings/conventions to encourage the establishment of similar workforce enhancement projects in other geographic areas of the state.

Key Activities and Products

- The Consumer/Provider Task force policy recommendations.
- A Transition Planning Team will facilitate nursing home transitions, using resources of AAAs, CILs, and nursing home providers who also participate in the SOURCE program.
- County-level Community Resource Mapping to identify existing providers, service gaps, and opportunities for expanding the existing providers' service capacity.
- Regional community service worker registries in two pilot site regions.
- A Regional Workforce Development Coordinator in each pilot site will facilitate the identification of local barriers to recruiting and retaining an adequate supply of healthcare workers in community-integrated settings.

Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Planning Activities

- *Blue Ribbon Task Force on Home and Community Based Services.* This Governor-appointed task force comprising consumers, parents, advocates, and professionals, spent over 2,800 volunteer hours listening to Georgians regarding improving and expanding community-based services, and distributed questionnaires to a variety of individuals and organizations receiving, delivering or in need of community-based services. The task force report's detailed description of the existing strengths and weaknesses and subsequent recommendations formed the basis for this grant proposal's goals and objectives.

- *Olmstead Planning Committee.* Governor-appointed committee consisting of providers, families, consumers, and advocates. This systems change proposal is viewed as one of the mechanisms necessary to effectively implement the committee’s action plans.
- *Coalition of Advocates for Georgia’s Elderly (CO-AGE).* Every year, CO-AGE participants choose three legislative and two budget priorities. The current priorities have been incorporated in this proposal’s goals and objectives. These priorities include: 1) fostering the statewide development and implementation of a comprehensive system of long-term care services and supports that maximize the independent living philosophy, quality of life, and recovery, while recognizing the need for interdependence and support; 2) preventing institutionalization when home and community services are more appropriate; 3) integrating primary care and prevention/early intervention.
- *The Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities.* At least 60 percent of the Council’s membership is of people with developmental disabilities, their parents, or guardians. Major issues addressed in the Council’s 5-year strategic plan are included in this proposal’s goals and objectives. These issues include: 1) people should have opportunities for real jobs; 2) people should have opportunities for real homes; 3) people should have opportunities for real learning experiences; 4) people should have opportunities for real choice in their lives; and 5) the Council should be an effective, efficient, result-oriented organization.
- *“Unlock the Waiting Lists” Campaign.* The Campaign is a partnership between different long-term care constituency groups. Representatives from the campaign served on the workgroup that prepared this proposal.
- Georgia received a Systems Change Starter grant that was used to fund active consumer advocate involvement (Consumer Systems Change Network) in preparing this grant. The grant funded the services of an experienced grant writer to assist the Network with preparing four grant proposals, it funded travel and lodging expenses for Network members, and it funded printing of resource guides distributed to Network members.

Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Implementation Activities

None cited.

Public Partners

Department of Community Affairs.

Private Partners and Subcontractors

- LH Kendall Consulting.
- DisABILITY LINK (ILC in Decatur, lead organization in another NH transition grant).
- Disability Connections (ILC in Macon).
- Access Center for Independent Living (ILC in Gainesville).
- Three Rivers Area HealthEducation Centers.
- Foothills Area Health Education Centers.
- Golden Age Properties (SOURCE provider).
- United Health Services (SOURCE provider).

- Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs).
- Family Connection Collaboratives.
- The Center for Housing Alternatives.
- Consultant to conduct Community Resource Mapping to be determined.

Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in the Planning Phase

Public Partners

No involvement was cited.

Private Partners

- Independent Living Centers. Issues included in the State Plan for Independent Living have been addressed by this grant proposal.
- The partnership between the two SOURCE providers and ILCs developed through the \$50,000 Starter Grant when all collaborated to develop the Consumer System Change Network.

Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in Implementation

Public Partners

The Department of Community Affairs will hire a new staff person to identify opportunities to increase accessible, affordable housing. That person will serve on the Consumer/Provider Task Force and will be available to assist the pilot sites' Transition Planning Teams in locating housing resources.

Private Partners

- ILCs will employ regional transition coordinators to facilitate transitions. These coordinators will be part of the Transition Planning Teams.
- AAAs will provide advocates for consumers interested in transition. These advocates will be part of the Transition Planning Teams.
- A coordinator housed at the Center for Housing Alternatives will serve on the Consumer/Provider Task Force and will be available to assist the pilot sites' Transition Planning Teams in locating housing resources.
- The Community Resource Mapping initiative will partner with county-based Family Connection Collaboratives to solicit input and support from a broad cross-section of their local communities. Each collaborative conducts periodic needs assessments and develops a unique plan reflecting the needs and strengths of its citizens. Every local agency, service organization, advocacy group, non-profit organization, and faith organization is an active member of the local collaborative.
- Area Health Education Centers have been contracted by the department to assist in enabling the development of a workforce sufficient to meet the long-term care needs in the community.

Existing Partnerships That Will Be Utilized to Leverage or Support Project Activities

Georgia's current demonstration project SOURCE is an intensive service coordination demonstration program offered in four limited areas of the state (27 counties). Two new SOURCE providers (Golden Age Properties and United Health Services, Inc.) will expand the SOURCE concept from a pre-nursing home/nursing home model to a pre-nursing home/nursing home/post-nursing home community integrated setting model.

Oversight/Advisory Committee

Consumer/Provider Task Force.

Formative Learning and Evaluation Activities

- The Project Director will be responsible for collecting project-related evaluation information. These evaluation status reports will be presented and reviewed at every task force meeting beginning in December 2001.
- The task force will utilize the information obtained from the evaluation status reports to identify and implement immediate midcourse modifications to the Transition Project's action plan, justify additional funding to support goals, and make modifications to the state's existing long-term care system.
- Part of the evaluation process will include the documentation of positive health and cost reduction outcomes through replication of the care pathways outcomes measurement tools.

Evidence of Enduring Change/Sustainability

- The state will share process and evaluation information about the initiative at meetings and conventions throughout the state. Once providers in other geographic areas of the state are aware of our initial pilot sites' fiscal success, they will strengthen and/or establish ongoing local efforts of their own.
- The state-level Consumer/Provider Task Force will be permanent and will continue to meet bimonthly after the two year project ends. The Consumer/Provider Task Force will continue to modify identified existing policies and to suggest additional ones that will streamline and improve essential support systems.
- Local partnerships between nursing homes, CILs, and AAAs strengthened and/or establishing during the grant are expected to continue.

Geographic Focus

The 14-county south central Georgia service area of the Golden Age SOURCE Project and the 4-county north Georgia service area of the United Health Services SOURCE Project.