Long-Term Care in Utah

The number of Utah residents age 85 and older is projected to nearly double by 2030.

Utah’s older population can be at greater risk for chronic illnesses and in need of long-term care. Nine percent of Utah’s population is age 65+ with nearly 33,000 residents age 85+. Utah’s age 85+ population – the age group that is most likely to need long-term care services – will grow 92% from 2007 to 2030. This ranks Utah 14th in the projected growth rate of the 85+ population.

Most prefer to receive long-term care at home; however, Utah spends nearly all of the state’s Medicaid funds on institutional care.

The majority of Americans age 50+ (89%) want to stay in their homes for as long as they can. Over 300,000 Utahns rely on Medicaid, and five percent are age 65+. Home and community-based service (HCBS) waivers allow Medicaid recipients to receive Medicaid funding for in-home care. In Utah, Medicaid allows some to choose in-home care instead of nursing home care. In 2006, 757 Utahns 65+ and 128 adults (18-64) with disabilities received a waiver. There were 62 adults (18-64) with a disability who waited to receive a waiver in 2008. On average, the Medicaid program can provide HCBS to three people for the cost of serving one person in a nursing home.

Utah spends almost none of its Medicaid long-term care dollars for older people and adults with physical disabilities on home and community-based care – ranking it 48th in spending on home care services for this population.

Utah’s average nursing home private pay rate ($157 per day) is lower than the national average.

In 2007, Utah’s nursing homes had an occupancy rate of 69%. In 2008, Utah’s nursing homes ranked #42 in the country in its average private pay daily rates. In 2008, Utah also had some of the lowest rates for Medicare-certified home health aides ($27/hr) and adult day care ($37/day). However, Utah had higher rates for private pay home health aides at $21 per hour.

A third of Utah’s nursing homes rated above average in health inspections.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) created a five-star quality rating to help consumers compare nursing homes. CMS rates nursing homes on health inspections, staffing, and quality measures.

The health inspection process is comprehensive and conducted by a trained team of objective surveyors.

Recent studies have found that non-profit nursing homes generally deliver higher quality of care. In 2007, 77% of Utah’s nursing homes were for profit (18%, non-profit; 5%, government-owned).

Few Americans have long-term care insurance.

Nationally, about 7 million long-term care insurance policies were in effect in 2005, and the typical purchaser was age 61 with assets over $100,000. Cost is a major factor in the decision to purchase long-term care insurance. In 2008, premiums for a married couple in their sixties were about $3,000 a year. Utah has not adopted the most recent long-term care insurance recommendations from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC).
The data utilized in this report is the most recent publicly available data collected for all states.


3 Providing More Long-term Support and Services at Home: Why It's Critical for Health Reform. AARP Public Policy Institute, June 2009. URL: http://www.aarp.org/research/ppi/ltc/hcbs/articles/fs_hcbs_hcr.html


5 Ibid. Medicaid 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Service Waiver Participants, by Type of Waiver, 2006. Data Source: The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured (KCMU) and The University of California at San Francisco's (UCSF) analysis based on The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Form 372, December 2009, Table 5. "Medicaid 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Service Programs: Data Update" available at http://www.kff.org/medicaid/7720.cfm. URL: http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparetable.jsp?ind=241&cat=4


7 Providing More Long-term Support and Services at Home: Why It's Critical for Health Reform. AARP Public Policy Institute, June 2009. URL: http://www.aarp.org/research/ppi/ltc/hcbs/articles/fs_hcbs_hcr.html


9 Ibid. Page 44.

10 Ibid. Page 66.

11 Ibid. Page 59.

12 Ibid. Page 60.

13 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Note: These data are updated monthly. Data for this brief was pulled on November 3, 2009. URL: http://www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/Include/DataSection/Questions/ProximitySearch.asp.

14 BMJ 2009 (British Medical Journal); 339:b2732. URL: www.pnhp.org/nursing_home


