Medicaid Reform – Where We Stand

AARP supports Medicaid and long-term care reform that provides coordinated, accessible, quality health care for all beneficiaries. Patients and providers deserve a system of care that allows both to be fully engaged partners in health care decisions.

- **Patients want a “say” in their health care.** Service providers and patients together should be allowed to determine the most appropriate course of care within the available resources.

- **The medical home system is a way to improve access to care and to keep patients informed about and engaged in their treatments and care.** It consists of excellent access to care where the patient is informed and engaged in their treatment and care. Care is coordinated with a free flow of information between primary care physicians, specialists, nurses, other health care professionals, facilities, and social service and financial assistance programs.

- **Recipients should be able to choose from among providers and service delivery systems.** Traditional managed care (HMOs) should be permitted to participate in the Medicaid health care system, but it should not be the only choice for Medicaid recipients. Reform implementation, especially for long-term care and persons with disabilities, should be in phases to allow adequate time for the development of local service delivery systems. Adequate transition time would increase chances that there will be sufficient types and numbers of providers and ample choices for service recipients.

- **Care management – care comes first.** Local lead agencies have been providing long-term care management services to clients for years. By meeting community needs with community resources, these agencies consistently provide services within a limited budget. This type of local decision making, rather than remote care control, facilitates ease of communication and delivery of services.

- **Keep what is working – the aging network.** Traditional managed care has limited experience and penetration in Florida’s long-term care environment. On the other hand, the aging service network has done an exemplary job of providing services and coordinating services to elders across the state.

- **Consumer protections should be a part of any reform effort.** Special conditions federal authorities approved for California’s new Medicaid reform initiative include consumer protections in enrollment, choice, transparency, person-centered planning and design, oversight, and measurement activities. Florida should include similar protections in any reform proposal.