

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION
for *Home Care, Inc*

A Profile of Home Health Care In Connecticut

Licensing

There are 86 agencies licensed to provide home health care services in Connecticut. The State does not require a “certificate of need” to obtain a home care license, creating a competitive environment. Connecticut is somewhat unique among states in that virtually all (82 out of 86) of the State-licensed home care agencies are also certified for Medicare - a higher standard of licensing.

Size

The average Medicare-certified home health agency in Connecticut maintains a census of about 1,100 patients, somewhat larger than the national average. Agencies vary in size from as few as 20 patients to several thousand and are nonprofit, for-profit or local public health service agencies. Total annual revenues are approximately \$400 million, with the Medicare and Medicaid programs accounting for 80 to 85 percent of that sum. Agencies employ nurses, home health aides, therapists, social workers and administrative staff. Many Medicare-certified home health agencies operate related programs such as private duty nursing, adult day care and meals on wheels and may also be affiliated with hospitals and long term care facilities.

Medicare

Home health agencies provided care to 47,500 Medicare beneficiaries in 2002 in Connecticut - slightly over nine percent of Medicare-eligible beneficiaries (not enrolled in an HMO). Most Medicare patients receive short-term care after a hospital stay - *the average length of a Medicare-covered home care episode is 42 days*. A significant proportion - thirty percent - of Medicare-covered home health patients in Connecticut are also eligible for Medicaid and have multiple chronic health conditions.

State-funded & Medicaid

The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE) is an innovative state- and Medicaid-funded program for low-income elders who would otherwise qualify for nursing home care. This program provided an array of home and community-based services to about 15,500 persons in 2002 and is estimated to have saved the Medicaid program \$55.5 million in SFY 2001 by keeping the elderly out of nursing homes. Most Medicaid patients in this program have multiple chronic illnesses (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, arthritis) and functional limitations requiring long term care - *the average length of stay in this program is four years*.

Home care services under the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elders are highly rated by patients - 98 percent of patients rated their skilled nursing services either “excellent or good” and 93 percent did so for home health aide services.

Medicaid also covers home care for about 5,000 patients who have serious illnesses, including psychiatric disorders.

Commercial Insurance and Self-Pay

Commercial Insurance and self-pay account for about 15 percent of the typical home health agency’s revenue in Connecticut. Payment for home care by HMOs has been declining in recent years as Medicare HMOs have left the Connecticut market.

Role of the Connecticut Association for Home Care in Quality Improvement

The Connecticut Association for Home Care has 64 provider members that have been actively involved in promoting quality in home care. Approximately 90 percent of home care agency members of the Connecticut Association for Home Care are voluntarily accredited by either the Joint Commission for Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JACHO) or Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP).

In addition to working with Qualidigm, the Association’s long-standing quality improvement activities include:

- ◆ A standing Quality Improvement Committee, which just completed the first phase of a study of wound care with prominent researchers;
- ◆ An active peer group of agency staff involved in quality improvement efforts;
- ◆ Affiliation agreements with private firms (e.g., Fazzi Associates, Outcome Concept Systems) to assist members in employing data-driven strategies for bench-marking agency performance in patient satisfaction, clinical outcomes and finances.
- ◆ Participation in the Connecticut Health Collaborative, including a Collaboration on Fall Prevention across all health care settings;
- ◆ Offering over 35 educational sessions annually with nationally recognized speakers on topics including wound care, patient assessments and management of chronic diseases.
- ◆ Assisting members in the implementation of new technologies such as point-of-care systems and telemedicine.