Setting the Balance of Care in Northwestern Ontario

Kerry Kulski, PhD Candidate
A Paul Williams, PhD
Whitney Berta, PhD
Audrey Laporte, PhD

Department of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, University of Toronto
CIHR Team Grant Symposium
November 20, 2009

Acknowledgements

Thesis Committee:
Dr. Paul Williams (Supervisor)
Dr. Whitney Berta
Dr. Audrey Laporte

Funders:
CIHR Institute of Aging (DRA) Fund Number: 481433
CIHR Team in Community Care and Health Human Resources Fund Number: CTP-79849

Key Participants:
North West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC)
North West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)
North West Balance of Care Steering Committee
North West Balance of Care Expert Panel
Sample

Individuals waiting for LTC facility placement in Northwestern Ontario = 858

Urban NWO (Thunder Bay) = 475
Population: 110,000

Rural NWO (all communities outside of Thunder Bay) = 383
Most communities have a population of <10,000

Research Questions

“What are the characteristics of individuals waiting for LTC facility placement in urban and rural areas of Northwestern Ontario?”

“How many individuals in urban and rural areas of Northwestern Ontario can safely and cost-effectively age at home with a community-based care package?”
Activities of Daily Living
Eating, Personal Hygiene, Locomotion, Toileting

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
Medications Management, Housekeeping, Meal Preparation, Using the Phone
Cognition
Short term memory, decision making ability, ability to make self understood, eating self-performance

Caregiver in the Home?
**Stratifications**

Individuals stratified into 1 of 36 possible For example, one group consisted of individuals who had no difficulty with ADLs, no difficulty with IADLs, were cognitively intact, and had a caregiver in the home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban NWO</th>
<th>Rural NWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Needs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(stratifications 1-6)</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Needs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(stratifications 31-36)</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Care Package Similarities**

- Personal Support Worker for bath assistance and light housekeeping
- Meal Support
- Transportation (medical appointments and social activities)
- Adult day centre (meals, activation, socialization)
- Support for the caregiver (respite care)
- Built in emergency response system
- OT for home modifications and safety checks
Care Package Differences

- **Urban packages were more expensive**
  - Community support services generally had a higher unit cost than the rural community support services) and contained more units of service

- **Urban packages generally contained more units of service**

- **Some of the service choices varied depending on what was available**
  (e.g. greater reliance on professional respite care program in urban NWO compared to volunteer respite program in rural areas)

Results

After the costs were calculated for each of the care packages- there were 3 possible outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Safe and Cost Effective</th>
<th>Safe but not Cost Effective</th>
<th>Unsafe (no package created)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban NWO</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural NWO</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions and Policy Implications

Conclusion
• Services that support IADLs are needed by most but most difficult to access

Policy Implication
• Services that support IADLs are not readily available across jurisdictions
• There remains little capacity to coordinate health and social care into care packages
• Trends of out migration of informal caregivers in this region also preclude access to social care

Conclusions and Policy Implications

Conclusion
• Waiting lists for LTC facility placement are not just driven by the needs of individuals, they are a reflection of community-based capacity - we see this expressed in rural and remote areas

Policy Implications
• Future investments need to consider the real meaning of waiting lists. Some people require institutional care….but do all?
• How can we build up service capacity in areas that lack critical mass?
Future Research

- Establish ways in which service capacity can be built up in communities that lack critical mass

- Analyze the cost implications of a shrinking informal care sector in rural areas, and how this impacts on an individual's ability to age at home

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