

Project Two: The Florida Long-Term Care Elder Population Profiles Survey

by

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Introduction

Long-term care is rapidly becoming an urgent public policy issue. In Florida, Medicaid long-term care costs have increased by more than 100% over the past five years. These costs are projected to increase by another 100% by 2005 if remedial action is not taken.

The Commission on Long-Term Care in Florida was established by the 1994 Legislature to develop policy recommendations designed to create a framework for long-term care in Florida. In December 1995, they provided those recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor. Those recommendations were designed to reorganize the long-term care delivery system in Florida in order to contain these escalating costs.

In order to accomplish their task, the Commission contracted with the Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging at the University of South Florida and the Southeast Florida Center on Aging at Florida International University to conduct two projects. Project One included projections of the need for and cost of providing long-term care in Florida from 1995 to the year 2000; a critique of Florida's current long-term care system; and recommendations for achieving greater cost efficiency and consumer satisfaction in that system.

In Project Two, the Commission contracted with the Policy Center and the Southeast Florida Center to conduct a survey designed to describe clients/residents, age 60 and older, served in Florida's array of publicly supported long-term care programs and to identify the variables that best predict the setting in which a person is likely to receive long-term care. The variables chosen for this study were drawn from the Project One literature review, which included studies designed to identify the major predictors of nursing home use. These include age, functional status, living arrangement, continence status, medication use, region of the state, gender, race/ethnicity and other variables identified in the literature as important predictors of long-term care service utilizations.

This report provides a functional status and demographic description of older adults in Florida's long-term care system and offers a basis for some preliminary inferences about the potential capacity of home- and community-based programs, including residential care, to substitute for nursing home care. The Project Two study, the first of its kind in Florida, is based on an extensive survey focused on descriptive characteristics of a randomly selected, statewide sample of over 2,300 long-term care recipients. The data generated through this survey (only a portion of which is published in this first report)

allows for comprehensive profiling of program constituents, which provides a basis for detailed comparisons to be made across and within care settings. This study does not, however, include all of the types of information necessary to make conclusive judgments about who should be served where in the long-term care system.

Organization of this Report

This report consists of six chapters. Chapter 2 describes the sampling and data collection methods used to conduct the survey in each setting. Chapter 3 provides comparisons of select characteristics of clients/residents across and within each of the care settings (programs). The comparisons are based on the variables which have been identified through the research literature as major predictors of nursing home use. The chapter concludes with summary client/resident profiles by care setting. Chapter 4 provides a comparative analysis of the program populations by functional impairment level and concludes with projections of the total number of long-term care recipients in each impairment level per care setting in Florida. Chapter 5 describes the results of multivariate statistical analysis used to identify the most significant predictors of where clients/residents receive long-term care services. The findings described in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are used to develop a series of conclusions and policy recommendations in Chapter 6.