



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES

## **CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND EVIDENCE BASED HEALTH PRACTICES MAY PREVENT DIMINISHED HEALTH AND DISABILITY**

*Health care services may be wasted, in part, because of a lack of provider application to clinical practice guidelines. Substandard medical practice can adversely affect patient health outcomes.*

A congressional briefing was held by the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) entitled “Can Health Reform Fix Care for Chronic Conditions?” Presenters at the forum were representatives from the AARP Policy Institute, researchers on integrated health care, representatives from schools of nursing and health care policy experts from the House of Representatives, Senate and the Administration.

### **Summary**

Models for providing healthcare to elderly persons with multiple chronic health conditions that address coordination of healthcare were presented. These models have passed the efficacy stage of development but have not yet been able to be reproduced as evidence based protocols in a wide variety of settings. Evidence based practices that involve clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) are not well understood by policy makers. However, discussions from the question and answer session revealed evidence based effectiveness examples in Veterans Administration (VA) services. Evidence based practices link defined, reproducible, widely disseminated protocols with defined results for stratified populations conducted under specified conditions. Efficacy models presented at the forum described randomized research activity that tests efficacy, not defined protocols that have been widely disseminated and meet hard evidence based standards such as those of the VA system. Medical researchers at the VA, using CPGs for many medical conditions, have put in place evidence based procedures that could be replicated in all of the 170 VA hospitals.

### **Disability Prevention Issue**

There are adverse health consequences to patients as a result of lack of use of CPGs that can diminish health of patients and contribute to disability. In addition, there is evidence that health care services are wasted, in part; due to lack of CPGs. Medical practice involves accurate assessment of symptoms, a diagnosis, and treatment. An error at any step in the process requires procedures to be repeated that results in waste and places the patient in circumstances where the health of patients can be diminished.

### **Intervention**

Post discussions were held and a letter was written to the professional who raised the issue concerning the consequences of not using CPGs and evidence based practices.

**Recommendation**

Clinical practice guidelines incorporated into evidence based practices should be a part of clinical medical practice and community based public health interventions.