



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

EVIDENCE BASED HUMAN SERVICE JOBS MAY PREVENT AND AMELIORATE DIMINISHED FUNCTION AND DISABILITY

Caregivers of people with physical and/or mental limitations can decrease consumers' functional limitations through evidence-based behavioral interventions.

A forum was held at the Center for American Progress on “Educating Our Entire Workforce in the 21st Century.” Presenters at the forum were economists, research policy experts in education and labor, a legislator and the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training.

Summary

There are opportunities to create skilled jobs that would facilitate the provision of evidence based human services that benefit consumers. There are 44.4 million caregivers over age 18 providing services to people with physical and/or mental impairments for approximately 37 hours a week. This care giving is free or of low pay, which requires little training because services are provided only for basic care. However, professional services can be provided that promote skills for self-sufficiency and adapt technological environments to individual functional needs that reduce demands for care. These skills can be developed and linked to a credential that is predicated on the behavioral sciences rather than on biological sciences.

Disability Prevention Issue

Evidence-based practices that emanate from the behavioral sciences are purported to be the gold standard for the prevention of diminished human function and disability, as well as for the maintenance of function for persons with disability. However, evidence based practices that link validated curricula and provider training curricula to socially valid consumer outcomes are rare. Thus, there are opportunities for skilled certified jobs. The evidence based system requires accountability for: 1) socially valid curricula for meaningful outcomes of consumers and providers, and 2) personnel preparation programs responsible for training providers. This system has been set up in the U.S. Department of Education to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act but is rarely used. Initiatives can be taken to provide caregivers with the skills they need to facilitate outcomes that result in self sufficiency for consumers and that prevent diminished function and disability.

Intervention

A letter was sent to the keynote presenter to comment on development of workforce personnel to prevent diminished health and function for self-sufficiency in adapted environments.

Recommendation

Initiatives need to be taken to train caregivers with skills that result in lesser need for basic care and ameliorate functional limitations and disability.