



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

EFFECTIVE SERVICES FROM HOMECARE GIVERS MAY AMELIORATE DISABILITY

Environmental accommodations and development of function to adapt to living environments can ameliorate disability and improve self-sufficiency.

There was a congressional briefing on Medicare Homecare. Presenters at the forum were a congressman familiar with the issues of home care, a provider, a representative from the disability community, and a former Senate Majority leader.

Summary

Home medical equipment and services are the most cost-effective portion of Medicare spending, increasing only 0.75 percent per year compared to 6% annual growth for Medicare spending overall. The comparative costs of home care services to nursing homes and institutions are dramatic. The average cost per day when home care is compared to nursing homes is 25 times less and well over 1,000 times less than hospital costs. In addition, home medical equipment is the slowest growing health care sector but equipment categories have been cut by 9.5% in 2009. One fifth of all Medicare patients are readmitted to hospitals within one month after discharge. These unplanned visits cost Medicare an estimated \$17 billion in 2004. Thus, there is need to refocus health care delivery priorities to the relative costs of home care.

Disability Prevention Issue

Discussions at the briefing revealed that the U.S. lags behind Europe in advances of home technology and improvement of people with disabilities to function on tasks related to self sufficiency in the home. Some countries in Europe adapt housing environments to abilities of consumers and prepare caregivers with skills to train and maintain patient function for self-sufficiency. Thus, there may a need to refocus on advancing home health services, through best practices, directed to improve function for human capacity for self sufficiency in adapted environments that also reduce costs.

Activity

A letter was written to the Congressman who presented at the forum, on effective home care for vulnerable population, with respect to environmental accommodations and improved functions of patients to ameliorate disability.

Principle

There should be initiatives to modify environments and apply technological advancements to home care services to ameliorate disability.