Long-Term Care in South Carolina

The number of South Carolina residents age 85 and older will vastly increase by 2032. South Carolina’s older population can be at greater risk for chronic illnesses and in need of long-term care. Fourteen percent of South Carolina’s population is 65+ and older with roughly 74,000 residents age 85 and older. South Carolina’s population age 85 and older will grow 101% from 2012 to 2032.

Most South Carolina residents prefer to receive long-term care at home; however, South Carolina spends most of the state’s Medicaid funds on institutional care.

By 2020, 12 million older Americans will need long-term care. Most will be cared for at home; family and friends are the sole caregivers for 70 percent of the elderly. A study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says that people who reach age 65 will likely have a 40 percent chance of entering a nursing home. About 10 percent of the people who enter a nursing home will stay there for five years or more. In South Carolina, 9 percent of people 65+ have a self-care disability and 11 percent have a cognitive disability.

The majority (89%) of Americans age 50+ want to stay in their homes for as long as they can, and most 50+ South Carolinians express concern about this. South Carolina’s long-term care budget does not reflect their concerns with most of its Medicaid long-term care dollars for older people and adults with physical disabilities going to institutional care.

In South Carolina, nine percent of residents age 65+ rely on Medicaid for health and long-term care. Home and community-based service (HCBS) waivers allow Medicaid recipients to receive long-term care at home instead of nursing home care. On average, the Medicaid program can provide HCBS to three people for the cost of serving one person in a nursing home.

In 2010, there were 186 nursing facilities in South Carolina with 18,866 beds of which 91 percent were occupied.

The average daily cost of nursing facilities in South Carolina is $175 per day. There were 480 assisted living and residential care facilities with 16,930 beds. The average daily cost of these facilities in South Carolina is $102 per day. The average daily cost for home health aides is $136 based on eight hours per day of care. The average cost for adult day care is $49 per day.

South Carolina’s nursing home deficiency rate is lower than the national rate.

In 2010, there were 186 certified nursing facilities in South Carolina. These facilities housed 17,259 South Carolina residents. The percentage of these facilities with severe deficiencies was 16.2 percent which puts South Carolina’s rate lower than the national rate of 23 percent.

Many South Carolina residents are providing unpaid care to a loved one and are performing a wide variety of caregiving tasks.

In South Carolina an estimated 770,000 people are providing family caregiving to a loved one at home. This care is valued at over $7 billion. The top caregiving tasks are providing or arranging for transportation, grocery shopping, managing finances, preparing meals, and doing housework. Nationally, 56 percent of caregivers would find a caregiver tax credit of $3,000 to be the most helpful resource to them. Additionally about one-third of caregivers would find help or information on keeping their loved ones safe at home, managing their own stress, easy activities to do with their care recipient and respite care helpful.

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Importance of Staying in Own Home

State Spending for Long-Term Care

*Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding
The data utilized in this report is the most recent publicly available data collected for all states.


3Medicare website. Long Term Care. URL: http://www.medicare.gov/LongTermCare/Static/Home.asp


7Houser, Ari., Fox-Grage, Wendy., Ujvari, Kathleen. Supra at Page 286.


10Houser, Ari, Fox-Grage, Wendy, Ujvari, Kathleen. supra at Pages 287-288.

11A deficiency: Given to nursing facilities for problems which can result in a negative impact on the health and safety of residents. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services define “actual harm” as a “deficiency that results in a negative outcome that has negatively affected the resident’s ability to achieve the individual's highest functional status. “Immediate jeopardy” is defined as a deficiency that "has caused (or is likely to cause) serious injury, harm, impairment, or death to a resident receiving care in the nursing home." The Kaiser Family Foundation, statehealthfacts.org. Providers and Service Use: Nursing Facilities-South Carolina, 2010. URL: http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/of-facilities-w-serious-deficiencies/


132012 AARP Member Opinion Survey. State Scorecards. AARP Research and Strategic Analysis. Washington, D.C.


15Barrett, Linda, Gibson Hunt, Gail, Lutz, Susan.. supra at Page 60.