

Alabama Continuum of Long Term Care Proposal

What is Alabama Continuum of Care?

Alabama's Continuum of Care approach is to create a long term care system that enables people with disabilities or fragile health to live in their own home or community setting for a longer period of time with the assistance of multiple levels of care. A continuum of care approach recognizes the importance of all components of a continuum of care: prevention, outreach, intake and assessment, emergency shelter, transitional programs, supportive housing, permanent housing and all appropriate support services. This approach promotes intensive assessment and case management services as a way to provide assistance and education to a consumer at risk of institutionalization. The assistance is intended to give the consumer greater opportunity and involvement in identifying, making decisions, choosing, accessing and managing assistance and services in the community prior to institutionalization.

The basic definition of a continuum of care is a comprehensive array of health care and related services designed to meet the continuing long term care needs of an individual in the most appropriate, least restrictive and cost-effective environment.

Why is Continuum of Care needed in Alabama?

Currently, individuals no longer capable of living independently in the community all too often access more confining care or enter an institution. Many times their preference and level of need would allow them to remain in the community with varying degrees of assistance if they and their families could receive information and education in maneuvering through the complicated and fragmented long term care system. Historically, it has proven beneficial to the individual and cost-effective for Medicaid to help an individual receive a more appropriate level of care which is less confining than nursing home care. However, there are many steps along the progression from independent living in the community to the nursing home. Also to be considered are mushrooming healthcare costs, increasing numbers of persons advancing in age, and increasing waiting lists for Medicaid waiver services. In 2008, there were 536,000 Alabama residents' ages 65-85 and 79,000 above 85. These numbers are expected to continue to increase.

A continuum of long term care recognizes the importance of all aspects of long term care including, but not limited to, prevention, outreach, intake and assessment, transitional programs, housing, and other support services.

Who are we currently serving?

People who need long term care in Alabama are a diverse group of individuals. This group includes the elderly with physical and cognitive impairments, as well as, children and young adults. People with disabilities on Medicaid include children and adults with mental retardation and developmental disabilities, the severely mentally ill, people with traumatic brain injuries and spinal cord injuries, adults with debilitating illnesses such as Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis, people with AIDS, and children born with severe physical and cognitive impairments such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, hearing loss or deafness, and blindness, and many other conditions. The following are the basic financial and functional eligibility categories to be covered by the Alabama Continuum of Care Program:

- Individuals of any age, who are Alabama residents, with chronic illnesses and disabilities who are in need of long term care services regardless of payment source.
- Individuals with mental retardation, mental illness, or autism.
- An eligible individual must have a functional limitation resulting from a physical condition including stroke, dementia, traumatic brain injury, and similar conditions associated with the aging process.
- An eligible individual must require assistance in performing activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs). These activities range from providing assistance with eating, dressing, and toileting to assisting with managing a home, prepare food, and medication management.

The designated entity will gather the appropriate information required to determine an individual's financial eligibility according to standards established by the Alabama Medicaid Agency. These standards may include:

- Individuals receiving SSI.
- Disabled individuals with income up to 300% of the SSI income level.
- Individuals not eligible for Medicaid who meet the medical criteria for long term care services.
- Institutionalized individuals determined to be eligible for transition into the community based upon a detailed assessment document.
- The individual is anticipated to move to the community within 180 days.

How will the Continuum of Care work?

One of the first steps is to determine how individuals in need of long term care services and resources will enter into the long term care continuum. The vision of Alabama's continuum of care system is to have a single point of entry (SPE) accessible in every community serving as a highly visible and trusted source of information where individuals can be educated on the full range of long term care support options and entry into public and private long term care support programs and benefits. The SPE system

would enable consumers to access long term care and supportive services through one agency or organization. Typical elements to be considered are awareness, information, assistance, and access with the consumer's need being the central element of the process. With one contact, a consumer receives information and assistance and, if appropriate, an assessment that identifies the person's functional capacity, health conditions, supportive service needs, individual preferences, and a description of the services available. The SPE will allow appropriate and necessary services to be accessed without providing services that are not necessary or desired because nothing else is available or known.

The attached charts depict the current long term care environment and the proposed long term care environment that the Alabama Continuum of Care Program will achieve.

The functions of a SPE include:

- Conducting a comprehensive assessment to determine where the consumer begins on the long term care continuum.
- Gathering documents to facilitate a timely financial eligibility determination, i.e., Medicaid, disability programs, Title III, or other resources.
- Providing information on the full array of services and financing options (public and private) for all income levels.
- Care planning and service authorizations.
- Referral coordination to services.
- Ongoing monitoring and reassessment.
- Planning for future long term care needs.
- Employment counseling for working age consumers with disabilities.

What is the SPE Key Component?

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Independent Living Centers (ILC), or other entity operating as a SPE will gather the appropriate information from the consumer or their representative. Required long-term care services will be determined through the use of a uniform assessment tool. This entity would provide reasonable access for walk-ins or through a 24-hour telephone number.

The Pre-admission Assessment is the key component that opens the door to the long term care services and resources along the continuum of care. An individual who is elderly or disabled and anticipates requiring assistance to remain in the community may request an assessment. The assessment would be open to non-Medicaid recipients as well as Medicaid recipients and offer various alternatives and options that would be available and appropriate in maintaining the individual in the community as anticipated health changes occur. This would be an education and planning session and be conducted by the case manager or independent living specialist of the AAA or ILC. It should provide all options and information available to the individual to make an informed choice. Optimally, the specialist could visit an individual's home, if requested, or be available during business hours in a central location as well as being available by telephone.

Case management or counseling staff would need to be informed of community options, cross trained with Medicaid staff and the staff of other agencies that may offer long term care services or other community resources that will delay or divert institutionalization. These agencies will include Medicaid, Department of Senior Services, Independent Living Centers, HUD, DHR, and many others.

What Medicaid services will be available on the Continuum?

Home and Community-Based Waiver Services

- ✓ Case Management
- ✓ Personal Care
- ✓ Homemaker Service
- ✓ Adult Companion Services
- ✓ Home Delivered Meals
- ✓ Adult Day Health
- ✓ Skilled/Unskilled Respite
- ✓ Skilled Nursing
- ✓ Personal Emergency Response Systems
- ✓ Medical Equipment Supplies and Appliances
- ✓ Assistive Technology
- ✓ Home Modifications
- ✓ Assisted Living Facility Services
- ✓ Transitional Services

State Plan Services

- ✓ Targeted Case Management
- ✓ Nursing Facility Services
- ✓ Hospital Services
- ✓ Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)
- ✓ Home Health
- ✓ Private Duty Nursing
- ✓ Durable Medical Equipment

While there is much to do to develop and make available flexible long term care options, there are other resources within the state designed to improve the quality of life of individuals who need long term care services and support. A few examples are:

- The ADSS through the Aging and Disability Resource Centers, a pilot project in 2 AAAs, offers a consumer-directed single point of entry into the continuum of care through a statewide database of organizations that provide services to older adult individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Caregiver respite services are provided through the Alabama Lifespan Resource Network.

- Alabama Senior Rx program provides assistance for senior citizens with chronic medical conditions who have no prescription drug coverage.
- Alabama Early Intervention coordinates services statewide for infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays from birth to age 3.
- Vocational Rehabilitation provides rehabilitation education and employment-related services to adolescents and adults with disabilities.

In the development of a continuum of long term care services, the following concepts should be remembered:

Core Values and Principles for Consumers:

- Ensure freedom of choice for consumer
- Ensure adherence to HIPAA privacy rules
- Consumer awareness

Intake and Assistance

- Preliminary medical/functional screening
- Preliminary financial screening for Medicaid eligibility
- Evaluate consumer's choice

Assistance:

- Long term support options counseling
- Referral
- Coordination
- Crisis intervention
- Planning for future needs

Access:

- Financial eligibility screening
- Comprehensive medical/functional screening
- Eligibility screening for other services
- Medicaid services
- State sponsored services
- Private pay services

Core Values and Principles for Partners:

- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Quality Management

Partnerships:

- State Agencies
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Independent Living Centers
- Alabama Nursing Home Association

- Alabama Hospital Association
- Medical Associations
- United Way - 211 Connect
- Alabama Respite Resource Network
- Other private partnerships

Design Decisions:

- Pilot versus statewide
- One entity as the SPE or various entities
- Personnel and staffing
- Service Package
- Financial strategy and sustainability
- System design and data management
- Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement

Attachments:

- Current Long Term Care Environment
- Proposed Continuum of Long Term Care
- Medicaid Beneficiaries Receiving LTC Services by Type of Service for FY 2006
- Payments for Medicaid Services by Type of Service for FY 2006
- Medicaid Beneficiaries Receiving LTC Services by Type of Service for FY 2007
- Payments for Medicaid Services by Type of Service for FY 2007
- Long Term Care Cost Per Person—Historical Data
- Unduplicated Number of Nursing Home Residents
- Alabama’s Elderly and Disabled Waiver Program
- Alabama’s SAIL Waiver Program

What are the next steps?

The Long Term Care Rebalancing Advisory Committee was created to develop a vision for a better and more responsive long term care system and the policies to promote the new system.

Attached are the goals and strategies necessary to promote the development of a Continuum of Care.