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LONG TERM Health Care Continuum Summit

Responding to our Demographic Challenges: an Aging Society

Thursday March 14, 2013

Conrad San Juan Condado Plaza
8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.



**Addressing Elderly Population Needs:
Elderly Centered Programs and Services**

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The “Baby Boom” generation (people born between 1946 and 1964) is already having an effect on the healthcare system and it is expected to grow as the century progresses.

- This new generation of older adults are better educated, have greater access to information, and more socioeconomic resources.
- These demographic patterns will change patterns of utilization and different demands for health services than those seen in past generations of older adults.



- Large numbers of healthcare workers will be retiring at the same time the demand for healthcare is on the rise.
- Certain professions and occupations are at greater risk of depletion than others.
- Occupations with long educational path tend to have older workers on average, i.e. physicians. In Puerto Rico, physicians in some surgical specialties such as urology are over the age of 55, on average.
- “The aging of the baby boomers comes at a time of a growing nursing workforce shortage” (ANA 2009).



- Most health professionals receive limited training in regards to care of older adults.
- Some medical specialties such as dermatology, surgery and dentistry do not recognize geriatrics as a specialty for certification; but recognize pediatrics.
- Less than 1% of nurses and pharmacists and less than 4% of social workers are specialized in geriatrics (Institute of Medicine of national academics, US 2008)
- Provider focus practice
- Informal caregivers (family and friends) are responsible for providing medical care without proper training for areas such as: wound care, medication administration, support in Daily Living Activities (DLA).

WHAT IS NEEDED?



Increased competence in the field of geriatrics for all healthcare professionals and caregivers

Healthcare professionals need to:

Adopt a **Patient Centered Approach**

- See the condition from the patient's perspective
- Organize the care around the patient

Develop greater **Communication Skills**

- Understand the health literacy level of the patient and speak to them in terms they understand
 - Understand a patient's environment
- Actively communicate with all team members

Focus on Quality Outcomes

- Translate medical evidence into practice

WHAT IS NEEDED?



- Use information technology
- Learn and practice population management care, coordinating across the healthcare continuum. (Over time, among providers, across settings)
- All professional licensure certifications should include demonstration of competence in care of older adults.
- Physician residency programs should encourage training of residents in all settings where older adults receive care (nursing homes, assisted living facilities and patients' homes).
- Financial incentives should be available to increase the number of geriatric specialists in all healthcare professions.

WHAT IS NEEDED?



- Training opportunities at the community level for informal caregivers.
- Better alignment between policy makers, healthcare organizations and the community.

As health professionals, it is our responsibility to understand healthcare from a patient's point of view... that's why we need to be sensitive to elders.



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Thank you

