



Retooling for an Aging America Conference

Council on Health Care Economics and Policy

SUMMARY

The percentage of Americans age 65 and older is expected to double—to more than 20 percent—by 2030, according to [Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce](#), a 2008 report from the Institute of Medicine. The report predicts that the United States will need an additional 3.5 million health care providers by 2030 as a result—a 35 percent increase.

In May 2009, the [Council on Health Care Economics and Policy](#) held its 16th annual conference, which focused on how to meet the needs of aging Americans for health care services. The council is composed of health policy researchers and economists who analyze the economic impact of changes in the U.S. health care system, and disseminate their findings among policy-makers, researchers, industry and the public.

RWJF supported the council's three previous conferences ([see Grant Results ID# 53560](#)) as well as earlier conferences ([see Additional Readings at the bottom of this Web page](#)).

Key Results

Staff at the Council on Health Care Economics and Policy reported the following results to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF):

- The council convened "How Will We Meet the Health Service Needs of an Aging America?" on May 20–21, 2009, at RWJF headquarters in Princeton, N.J. The conference drew 127 people from some 84 organizations in government, academia, industry and the nonprofit sector.

The conference featured eight sessions and 19 speakers. Sessions included:

- Supply and demand for major health professions
- Current trends and innovative models in delivering care
- Financing health services: current and future trends
- How do other countries provide services to their aging populations?

- Initiatives to implement the Institute of Medicine recommendations
- Cure and care in the last years of life
- Health services needs of aging minorities
- Where are we going from here?
- The council released a [policy brief](#) summarizing each session and offering key recommendations from the conference. The council also created a [Princeton Conference XVI page](#) on its website, which includes links to the conference agenda, slides from each presentation, and the policy brief.

Key Recommendations

Conference participants identified several recommendations, as reported in the policy brief:

- Consider regulatory changes to allow more lower-cost, nonphysician providers to offer health care services.
- Train more nurse practitioners and direct-care workers, and provide more geriatric-focused training to all health care workers.
- Diffuse effective models for caring for elders with chronic diseases and delivering palliative care. These models include nurse-led coordination of care; transitional care as patients move between practitioners and settings; and initiatives that drive behavioral change among patients.
- Change payment policies to reimburse proven models for delivering care, such as transitional care and palliative care, and to spur greater coordination of care.
- Encourage the use of technologies that can make providers more efficient, facilitate the coordination of care and deliver care in less costly settings, such as electronic medical records and remote patient monitoring.
- Focus on long-term care as a critical aspect of caring for an aging population, particularly those who cannot afford private assisted living.

Funding

To help support this conference, RWJF provided \$49,986 to the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, in Waltham, Mass., from January 2009 to December 2009. Other funders included:

- Brookdale Foundation (\$50,000)
- Jewish Healthcare Foundation (\$50,000)
- Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation (\$35,000)

- Ascension Health (\$25,000)
- Association of American Medical Colleges (\$25,000)
- John A. Hartford Foundation (\$20,000)
- The Commonwealth Fund (\$10,000)
- AARP (\$10,000)

AFTERWARD

With funding from RWJF and eight other organizations, the council held its 17th annual conference at RWJF headquarters on May 19–20, 2010. Experts spoke on key aspects of end-of-life care, including promising new practices and policies, and frameworks for economical and ethical decision-making. Information on the conference is available on the council's [Web site](#).

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Current as of date of this report; as provided by the grantee organization; not verified by RWJF; items not available from RWJF.)

Conference

“How Will We Meet the Health Service Needs of an Aging America?” May 20–21, 2009, Princeton, N.J. Attended by 127 registrants representing 84 organizations from 20 states, including the National Institutes of Health, the Heritage Foundation, Harvard University and Ascension Health. Eight sessions and 19 presentations. Conference agenda, slides from the presentations and a policy brief are available [online](#).

Report

How Will We Meet the Health Service Needs of an Aging America? Policy brief. Waltham, MA: Council on Health Care Economics and Policy, Heller School of Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, December 2009. Available [online](#).