



Governance Learning Series: Trends in Aging Services

Major trends in aging services in Georgia include:

- Fewer and “sicker” people in nursing homes and shorter lengths of stay (LOS).
- Traditional nursing home designs and programs will not survive the needs or demands of Boomers.
- Community-based service options will grow.
- Telemonitoring and other applied technologies will allow people to stay in their own homes longer.
- Housing with services will grow.
- Customers and staff will be more ethnically diverse.

Nursing home use is declining because:

THE “OLDEST OLD” ARE HEALTHIER. Fewer elderly with disabilities can mean fewer people who need long term care.

LENGTH OF STAY IS DECREASING. Average length of stay declined from 35 months in 1985 to 29 months in 2004 and continues to decline. (How is your LOS changing?)

OPTIONS ARE GROWING. Alternatives to nursing homes have grown in recent years, including assisted living and community-based services.

GOVERNMENT POLICY. Federal and state governments are focused on restricting entry into nursing homes and shifting toward more community-based service options.

The American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging reports these additional trends:

1. Assisted living residents are increasingly frailty and disabled. Consequently, regulation will likely increase.
2. Government is scrutinizing CCRC activities, particularly related to fair housing and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
3. New projects will need to offer the people maximum flexibility to ensure satisfaction and solvency for the organization.
4. Property tax exemptions will be scrutinized for legal compliance.
5. Families will continue to be primary caregivers in the community.

Governing Bodies should consider the implications of these trends and develop a plan to fulfill their mission in new ways the future.