

Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS) 2008 Survey on Satisfaction with Care and Services Findings & Recommendations

In the fall of 2008, a survey was conducted concerning care and services provided by the Arizona Long Term Care System for the Elderly and Physically Disabled (ALTCS-EPD). The survey covered the wide range of care and services provided through the ALTCS-EPD program and involved members enrolled with all eight of the program contractors who administer the program statewide. In general, results were favorable, though some areas for possible improvement were identified.



This project was conducted by Synovate in cooperation with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). An electronic version of this report, as well as a more detailed report of survey methods and findings, can be found at the AHCCCS website: www.azahcccs.gov



The Arizona Long Term Care System for the Elderly and Physically Disabled

The Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS) provides acute healthcare, behavioral healthcare, and long-term care services to Medicaid beneficiaries who are at immediate risk of institutionalization. Many of these beneficiaries are elderly or physically disabled (EPD) individuals whose care and services are delivered through one of eight program contractors. Each member in this ALTCS-EPD program has a case manager, assigned by the program contractor, who monitors the member's needs and helps the member to obtain care and services.

Members reside in one of three care settings: nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, or their own homes. Because members residing in these different care settings often have different needs, the ALTCS-EPD program covers an extremely wide range of services and types of care. Consequently, learning about the experiences and attitudes of those served by the program required a large-scale survey of individuals in various locations and situations that covered a wide variety of topics. ■

The 2008 Satisfaction Survey

In the fall of 2008, 3,217 individuals were surveyed by telephone. Many of these individuals were members themselves, and many were family members or others who had a significant role in managing the member's healthcare arrangements. These non-members are important survey respondents in their own right, as they interact with case managers, program contractors, and providers to arrange for care and services.

Survey respondents represented all eight program contractors and all three care settings (Nursing Facility, Assisted Living, and Home). The survey covered seven

aspects of the care and services provided by the ALTCS-EPD program.

Topics covered:

- Facilities (nursing and assisted living)
- Facility staff & caregivers
- Home caregivers
- Personal doctors & nurse practitioners
- Case managers
- Transportation for medical services
- Program contractors

In general, results were favorable. Those served by the ALTCS-EPD program are generally satisfied with all aspects of care and services, and especially with their case managers and home caregivers. Some areas for possible improvement were identified. Following are key findings and recommendations organized according to the seven areas of care and services. ■

Facilities

Respondents were asked a series of questions about conditions at nursing facilities and assisted-living facilities.

In general, results were positive, with between 72% and 86% saying "yes, always" in response to questions about whether

- the member's room is clean,
- the bathroom is clean,
- common areas are clean,
- the area around the member's room is quiet at night
- the administration works to fix problems that are raised by residents.

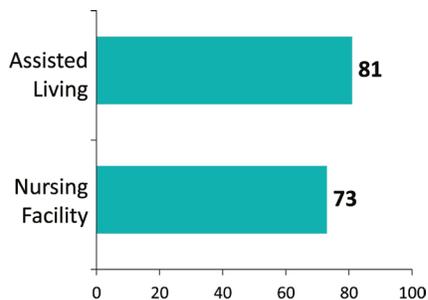
(The other response options on these items were "yes, sometimes" and "no.")

Overall, 94% of those who reside in facilities (or the non-members who help manage their healthcare arrangements)

regard their facilities as “good,” “very good,” or “excellent.” (Other response options were “fair” and “poor.”)

Assisted living facilities were evaluated more favorably than nursing facilities on almost every aspect of care, and this was reflected in overall ratings, as well:

Percentage who say facility is “very good” or “excellent”



The only exception to this trend was in whether staff organize enough activities for residents. On this item, assisted living facilities fared worse than nursing facilities.

Recommendation: Investigate improvements in nursing facilities to narrow the gap with assisted living facilities. ■

Facility Staff and Caregivers

Facility staff and caregivers are almost universally perceived as respectful and as gentle when providing physical assistance, and these two factors appear to be particularly important determinants of respondents’ overall satisfaction.

Overall satisfaction is high, with 94% saying that facility staff and caregivers are “good,” “very good,” or “excellent.”

There may be room for improvement in two areas:

- 19% say staff should allow residents to make more decisions for themselves.
- 16% report a problem communicating with facility staff due to a language barrier.

Recommendation: Explore ways of allowing greater autonomy for residents and ways of reducing language barriers between facility staff and residents. ■

Home Caregivers

Satisfaction with those who provide care and services at home is very high. 95% say that home caregivers are “good,” “very good,” or “excellent,” and questions about individual aspects of care do not reveal any specific problems or areas for improvement. ■

Personal Doctors and Nurse Practitioners

Results concerning personal doctors and nurse practitioners were quite good, with 96% of the population feeling that their personal doctor or nurse practitioner is “good,” “very good,” or “excellent.” Questions about individual aspects of care did not reveal any specific problems or any particular areas for improvement. ■

Case Managers

Respondents were asked a series of questions about case managers. Between 86% and 92% say “yes, always” in response to questions about whether

- the case manager explains things in a way that is easy to understand
- the case manager listens carefully
- the case manager is knowledgeable about the care and services received by the member.

Furthermore, 90% say that the case manager has provided help quickly, and 93% say that the case manager responded promptly to a request for information.

Respondents were also asked about specific problems that may have arisen with case managers, and these questions revealed very low rates of problems.

Overall satisfaction with case managers is high. 96% regard their case managers as “good,” “very good,” or “excellent.”

In general, both members and non-members tend to report that a case manager has visited the member twice in the last 6 months (or an average of one visit every 3 months). There are no important differences among program contractors in this regard. ■

Transportation for Medical Services

There seems to be room for improvement in providing transportation for medical services. Overall, 18% say they have had a problem getting transportation for medical services in the last 6 months. Some program contractors perform better than others in this regard. Also, these problems appear to be more frequent in Pima County (20%) and Maricopa County (21%) than in other, more rural parts of the state (11%).

Recommendation: Focus on providing transportation for medical services. For at least some of the program contractors, there is room for improvement in this area of service. ■

Program Contractors

Overall satisfaction with program contractors is high. 94% regard their program contractor as “good,” “very good,” or “excellent.”

The most important factor in determining overall satisfaction with program contractors is ready access to information, and yet there appears to be some room for improvement in this regard, at least among some program contractors. Overall, 21% have had a problem getting information from their program contractor in the last 6 months.

Recommendation: Focus on making it easy for members, as well as those who help them with healthcare arrangements, to get high-quality information on care and services, billing, and other important topics. ■