Profiling Maine’s Long Term Support System

A recent report by the Muskie School and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services provides a new way of looking at the state’s long term support system. With an emphasis on developing a common approach for description and analysis across programs, the profile reveals that users of long term services and supports in Maine span all age groups and types of service users. In fact, 28% are ages 17 or younger and 29% are between the age of 35 and 64. Long term service users include people with physical impairments, cognitive and intellectual disabilities, and people who need behavioral health support. In Maine, these long term service users account for two-thirds of total Medicaid expenditures.

A Cross-System Profile of Maine’s Long Term Support System: A New View of Maine’s Long Term Services and Supports and the People Served is a baseline assessment of Maine’s current long term support systems serving:

- Adults with mental illness
- Older adults and adults with disabilities
- Adults with brain injury
- Adults with developmental disabilities
- Children with disabilities

This profile gathers information that can help DHHS answer the question: Does our long term service system provide the right balance of supports and services across all institutional, home, and community-based settings?

A New Way of Looking at Long Term Services and Supports

To make it easier to look across programs, this report uses a new vocabulary for grouping and describing services consistently across programs and employs new strategies for defining population groups to capture only those who have a continuing need for services. It also focuses on the people served and the services they receive, rather than the programs providing those services. This new orientation captures all Medicaid utilization and expenditures, not just services administered by a particular program.

Uses for a Cross-System Profile

The standardized approach used in this cross-system profile provides an important vehicle for fostering greater understanding of the commonalities and differences across population groups. This improved understanding provides opportunities for addressing common issues in a coherent way. It also permits preliminary comparisons that could lead to further analysis: Are differences based on the different needs of the population groups, or are they the result of policy and operational decisions

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that could be changed? Finally, the information in the profile can be used for setting long term system goals for allocating resources across service settings and improving the service system.

What’s in Maine’s Cross-System Profile?

Data and information provided in the 147-page report include:

- A snapshot of the demographics, utilization and expenditures for each population group. (See sample graphs to the right.)

- An overview of the services available for each population group, eligibility criteria, the delivery system, and other details. (See illustration below)

- An evaluation of systems components of long term support systems that determines if all the necessary elements are present.