



NEWS RELEASE

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WISE & Healthy Aging is 'Early Adopter' of National Accreditation Program to Standardize Long-Term Supportive Services

New Pilot Program Establishes Standards for Nonmedical Services for Populations with Complex Needs

SANTA MONICA (Aug. 11, 2016) – WISE & Healthy Aging is one of the first community-based organizations in the nation and the only one in Los Angeles County to participate in a new pilot program designed to standardize, measure and improve the quality of care provided to older adults and others who need long-term supportive services.

The new accreditation is offered by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) in Washington, D.C. and will be available to organizations nationwide that are responsible for coordinating long-term services and supports. Included in this group are health plans, managed



behavioral health organizations and community-based organizations, such as WISE & Healthy Aging. Those that meet the program's stringent guidelines will be eligible for accreditation similar to the way hospitals are accredited by The Joint Commission.

Long-term supportive services encompass a wide range of extra assistance people may need when they have difficulty with self-care tasks as a result of aging, chronic illness or disability. These can include help with bathing or cooking, arranging transportation for doctor's appointments, paying bills or performing other day-to-day activities. Coordination of such services – case management – is key to supporting individuals who want to live independently at home.

"One of our highest priorities at WISE & Healthy Aging is supporting older adults in their desire and ability to live independently in their own homes and age in place," said Grace Cheng Braun, president and CEO of

(more)

WISE & Healthy Aging. “We’ve been offering quality, person-centered, in-home case management for over four decades, and are honored to be among the first in the nation to be part of this pilot program,” added Blaine McFadden, LCSW, CCM, Director of Care Management.

Historically, providers of long-term supportive services have had to design and implement their own case management programs – often with no means of objectively measuring quality or results. With accreditation, they will have a road map for developing standardized case management plans and will also have a way to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs.

In addition, NCQA accreditation will make it easier for health plans and providers to identify service organizations with a commitment to quality. This is important, particularly when one considers the complex needs of fragile clients who are served by long-term supportive services providers and the high cost of emergency room visits and hospital readmissions for older adults.

“Participating in the accreditation program is voluntary but important because it creates a standardized roadmap for quality case management,” said Cheng Braun. “That’s key to providing quality care at lower costs, keeping older adults out of the emergency room, avoiding readmission to the hospital and helping individuals remain independent and in their own homes for as long as possible.”

With NCQA accreditation, WISE & Healthy Aging will be also be able to contract with health plans to provide case management, as well as be considered a “best practice” in long-term supportive services.

The accreditation process takes more than a year. The first NCQA pre-accreditation surveys are planned for September 2017, with notification of accreditation anticipated by the end of that year.

FACTOIDS:

- Nationwide, about 11 million adults 18 and older receive long-term supportive services. Demographic trends suggest considerable growth in the number of Americans who will need long-term supportive services in the coming decades. (NCQA)
- Medicaid (MediCal in California) is the primary payer for both institutional and community-based long-term support services. Medicaid/MediCal programs are increasingly moving to coordinated or “managed” models of long-term supportive services. (NCQA)
- According to the national Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services data, nearly one in five Medicare patients discharged from the hospital – approximately 2.6 million older adults annually – are readmitted within a month, at a cost of \$26 billion.
- Upon hospital discharge, in-home case management is essential to help the older adult transition and reduce readmissions.
- NCQA accreditation will create a standardized road map for health plans to coordinate delivery of high-quality care directly or through community-based organizations such as WISE & Healthy Aging.
- As an early adopter, WISE & Healthy Aging will be part of the long-term supportive services Best Practices Academy.

ABOUT WISE & Healthy Aging

WISE & Healthy Aging is a multi-service, non-profit organization serving older adults and their families and caregivers throughout Los Angeles County. Headquartered in Santa Monica, the team at WISE & Healthy Aging works to promote and improve the well-being, independence and self-esteem of seniors, and to prevent premature institutionalization whenever possible.

PHOTO CAPTION: The social work professionals in WISE & Healthy Aging's Care Management Program: (l to r) Allison Carl, MSW; Wendy Jaffa, MSW; Tami Mann, LVN, MSW; Blaine McFadden, LSCW, CCM.