



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)
Office of Behavioral Health, Disability, and Aging Policy (BHDAP)

To our partners in research and policy analysis:

I am delighted to share with you BHDAP's second newsletter of 2022! As you will see below, in recent months our team has published research on:

- Coordinated specialty care for individuals with serious mental illness.
- Substance use disorder treatment facilities' use of patient placement criteria.
- Efforts to improve the quality of prescribing in long-term care settings.
- Mitigating occupational injuries in the long-term care workforce.
- And more!

In addition, May marked the 10th Anniversary of the [National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease \[Press Release\]](#), the federal strategy for reducing the burden of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (AD/ADRD) by accelerating research towards treatments, improving care and support for people facing these conditions now, and reducing the risk of AD/ADRD by promoting brain health. This summer, through a series of publications and events [\[Anniversary Page\]](#), across the Department we have celebrated the [significant accomplishments](#) of HHS and our federal partners in working together towards these goals -- while also acknowledging how much work lies ahead. We also held our [quarterly meeting in July](#) where subcommittees presented [recommendations](#) and the Council voted to adopt them.

We thank you for your partnership and interest in our work!

Dr. Tisamarie Sherry, Deputy Assistant Secretary

New NAPA Related Report: Federal Efforts to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias [\[Read Report\]](#)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Antipsychotic Medication Prescribing in Long-Term Care Facilities Increased in the Early Months of the COVID-19 Pandemic Issue Brief *(posted April 7, 2022)*

[Read Brief](#)

Prescriptions dispensed for antipsychotics in nursing homes and assisted living facilities increased since the beginning of the pandemic, with 20.8 thousand dispensed in 2020 compared to 20.5 thousand in 2019. This represents a 1.5% increase in total prescriptions since the beginning of the pandemic despite lower resident census levels in long-term care facilities (LTCFs). In 2020, the highest increase in the number of prescriptions dispensed occurred during the first quarter of the pandemic, with an increase of 7.4% compared to the first quarter of 2019. After this initial increase, the quarterly number of prescriptions for

antipsychotic medications dropped close to pre-pandemic levels, despite a declining nursing home resident census and likely a declining LTCF resident census overall.

Coordinated Specialty Care Transition Study *(posted May 2, 2022)*

[Landing Page](#)

As Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) programs expand, teams are increasingly faced with decisions on how to sustain gains achieved in early intervention programs once clients are no longer receiving intensive services. This project seeks to review the current landscape through an environmental scan and case studies of nine sites to understand the scope, structure, implementation and policy challenges and opportunities in providing continuing care to people experiencing early psychosis after graduating from a CSC program. Under a contract from ASPE, Westat produced an environmental scan, a report and an issue brief that include a typology of transition services, highlight existing approaches to transition services after participation in CSC programs and avenues for integration of transition services within programs and organizations.

Continuity of Care Services Following Coordinated Specialty Care: An Environmental Scan

[Read Report](#)

Transition Options, Opportunities for Integration, and Funding Considerations Following Coordinated Specialty Care Issue Brief

[Read Brief](#)

The Coordinated Specialty Care Transition Study: Final Report

[Read Report](#)

Mitigating Direct Care Workforce Injuries in Homecare: A Summary of the Evidence

(posted June 16, 2022)

[Read Report](#)

Due to the increasing demand for homecare workers and the high rate of occupational injuries among these workers, addressing homecare worker safety is critically important. High injury rates among homecare workers contribute to turnover and absenteeism, and lead to high costs of workers' compensation insurance for employers. The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the essential role that homecare workers play in supporting clients at home, and the safety risks they encounter to perform their job. This study explores the evidence for using assistive technologies and home modifications for lifting, transferring, and repositioning to reduce homecare worker injuries.

Federal Efforts to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias Issue Brief *(posted June 7, 2022)*

[Read Report](#)

The National Alzheimer’s Project Act (NAPA) requires “the inclusion of ethnic and racial populations at higher risk for Alzheimer’s or least likely to receive care, in clinical, research, and service efforts with the purpose of decreasing health disparities in Alzheimer’s”. In order to meet this requirement, in 2020 the Advisory Council on Alzheimer’s Research, Care, and Services recommended that in order to advance health equity, work must be done to address racial and ethnic disparities in ARDR. As a starting point, the Advisory Council tasked HHS to develop a report on federal initiatives taken to address such disparities. ASPE, which coordinates the implementation of NAPA, developed an issue brief and inventory of federal efforts to address racial and ethnic disparities in dementia research, care, and services.

Survey on Substance Use Disorder Patient Placement Criteria and Assessments: Final Report *(posted June 16, 2022)*

[Read Report](#)

To identify and address gaps in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment capacity, state and federal policymakers need information on the need and demand for different SUD levels of care. To develop this information, this project fielded a survey of Single State Agencies for Substance Use Services and Medicaid agencies to every state and the District of Columbia. It collected information on how patient placement criteria are operationalized, and the degree to which data are collected and can be used to determine treatment needs across states. The study identified an opportunity to collect aggregate de-identified information from a subset states on treatment needs by level of care.

Changes in Ownership of Skilled Nursing Facilities (2016-2021): Analysis Using Newly Released CMS Data *(posted July 8, 2022)*

[Read Report](#)

Newly released CMS skilled nursing facilities (SNF) Change of Ownership (CHOW) data allows for a better understanding of how the nursing home ownership financial structures are changing. A total of 3,258 SNFs have been sold since 2016. Roughly 3.5% of SNFs are sold in the United States each year since then. Data also shows that more than 30% of SNFs in Utah, Texas, Arkansas, Virginia, and Maryland had a change in ownership since 2016. Lastly, more SNFs with lower overall quality ratings were more likely to be sold.

Opioid Use in Long-Term Care Settings: Final Report *(posted August 9, 2022)*

[Read Report](#)

Using pharmacy claims data, this project tracked the use of pain medications across retail and long-term care pharmacy settings. Our study findings are based on a sample of individuals aged 65 and above who were admitted to long-term care (a category that includes nursing

homes (SNFs, nursing facilities and assisted living facilities) and received opioid or non-opioid pain medications there between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019.

State Use of Value-Based Payment in Nursing Facilities (*posted August 18, 2022*)

[Read Report](#)

Payers across the health care spectrum have begun transitioning from paying for quantity toward paying for quality. These value-based payment (VBP) programs vary in scope and focus, but generally share the goals of improving cost-savings and linking payments to value rather than volume. Many states have implemented VBP programs that provides payment incentives to nursing facilities for achieving certain goals; however, little is known about how VBP programs for Medicaid-covered nursing facility care are designed, the specific goals states are trying to achieve with these, and whether they are successful in achieving their stated goals. This exploratory study sought to understand which states use value-based purchasing programs as part of their nursing facility Medicaid payment; what are the goals of VBP programs and have states achieved their goals; and what are the key elements of VBP programs.

BHDAP IN ACTION

- Dr. Tisamarie Sherry presented at the Joint Economic Committee roundtable discussion on: [The Economic Costs of Alzheimer’s Disease](#).
- BHDAP researchers presented at the NASEM workshop: [Mechanisms for Organizational Behavior Change to Address the Needs of People Living with AD/ADRD](#).
- BHDAP researchers published in *Psychiatric Services*: [Mental Health Conditions Among Children and Adolescents with a COVID-19 Diagnosis](#).
- BHDAP researchers published in *Health Services Research*: [Effects of Medicaid expansion on insurance coverage and health services use among adults with disabilities newly eligible for Medicaid](#).
- BHDAP researchers published in the *Journal of Rural Health*: [Broadband access and telemedicine adoption for opioid use disorder treatment in the United States](#).
- BHDAP researchers published in *General Hospital Psychiatry*: [Prescriptions of antipsychotics dispensed in LTCFs during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).
- BHDAP researchers published in the *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*: [Is buprenorphine treatment availability associated with decreases in substantiated cases of child maltreatment?](#)

Past Newsletters are available at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/bhdap-newsletters>.

WHO WE ARE: ASPE is the principal advisor to the Secretary of HHS on policy development, including major activities in policy coordination, legislative development, policy research, program evaluation, and economic analysis. Within ASPE, BHDAP focuses on policies and programs that support the independence, productivity, health and well-being of people with disabilities, people with behavioral health conditions, and older adults, including those with long-term care needs.

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