



June 25, 2013

Dear Commissioners:

Congratulations on your appointments to and the inaugural meeting of the Commission on Long-Term Care. The commissioners' collective range and depth of expertise provide an excellent base from which the Commission can formulate sound recommendations on reforming our nation's long-term care system. To that end, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) offer the following set of consensus principles for reform that we hope provide a framework on essential elements to a reformed system, from the consumer, family and long-term services and supports (LTSS) worker perspective.

Together, LCAO and CCD include over 150 organizations representing older adults, people with disabilities, and providers of health, housing and supportive services. Our consensus on a new direction for financing and delivering these services puts millions of Americans behind the push for reform.

An estimated 11 million Americans currently have needs for LTSS. The number of individuals needing LTSS is projected to increase to 27 million by 2050. However, the nation lacks a coordinated, national public-private system for delivering LTSS. Nearly half of all funding for these services is now provided through Medicaid, which is a growing burden on states and requires individuals to become and remain poor to receive the help they need. While the situation has improved, the institutional bias in Medicaid persists whereby the majority of LTSS funding is directed toward nursing homes and other institutions instead of preferred community-based services and supports.

The principles adopted by CCD and LCAO call for national solutions. Consumers should have access to a broad array of affordable, quality support options, including a range of home and community-based supportive services. The financing system(s) should facilitate universal access so that individuals of all ages and disabilities can obtain LTSS. The financing system should promote independence and dignity across the lifespan by ensuring individuals the right to control and choose what services they receive, how and where they are delivered, and who provides them. Any system must also put in place strategies for supporting the central role of family caregivers and attracting and retaining an adequate number of direct care workers to deliver high quality services.

Long-term services and supports are essential to the health and economic well-being of millions of Americans. The CCD and LCAO principles provide the Commission on Long-Term Care with a blueprint for its work. We appreciate the difficult task that you have been given and look forward to working with you throughout the process. We believe that the Commission would be well served by first reaching agreement on the scope of the problem and its many elements, and next agreeing on a range of possible solutions before attempting to select which solutions should be recommended.

We look forward to being a resource to the Commission and working with you to improve LTSS in this country. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance in your work.

Sincerely,

Edward F. Coyle
Chair
LCAO

Katy Beh Neas
Chair
CCD