

Poster Abstract – Research Category

Title: Medical Foster Homes: Shifting Nursing Home Care to "Micro" Homes in the Community

Presenting Author: Cari Levy, MD, PhD, CMD, Denver VA Medical Center

Author(s): Cari Levy, MD, PhD, CMD; Emily Whitfield, PhD

Introduction/Objective: Medical Foster Homes (MFH) are an alternative to nursing home care for Veterans who prefer care in a private home rather than an institutional setting. Referred to as "micro homes," up to three residents can receive care in the home from a primary caregiver who owns the home and receives room and board payment from the Veteran. All medical care is provided by the VA Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) Program.

Design/Methodology: Demographics, utilization and costs for all Veterans enrolled in the MFH Program in Fiscal Year 2009-2010 (N=208) were compared to all HBPC (N=25,247) and long stay Community Living Center (CLC) enrollees (2,180) for the same time period.

Results: MFH enrollees remained in the program an average of 251 days. While significantly more HBPC visits occurred in the year following MFH enrollment (42.2 vs 9.9, $p<0.001$), total costs to VA were \$53,171 less than in the year prior to enrollment (\$101,164 vs. \$48,993, $p<0.001$) primarily due to significantly fewer hospitalizations (2.5 vs. 1.7, $p=0.04$) and nursing home encounters (1.1 vs. 0.4, $p=0.001$).

Conclusion/Discussion: MFHs or "micro homes," provide an alternative to nursing homes by partnering HBPC with unskilled community caregivers. Hospitalizations and nursing home utilization decreased in the year following enrollment resulting in lower total costs to VA. Application outside the VA is needed and the Medicare Independence at Home Initiative represents an opportunity to explore application of this care model in the broader Medicare population.

Author Disclosures: VA Geriatrics and Extended Care