

Living Independently for Elders Center: Providing Quality Care to Seniors – At Home

The Challenge:

Frail, inner-city seniors facing complex medical, functional and psycho-social problems who are nursing home-eligible but want to remain in the familiar surroundings of their own homes and communities.

The Goal:

Provide integrated mental and physical health care in the home.

An Innovative Solution:

Establish teams of health care providers to manage patients' needs, providing integrated acute and long-term care services.

What It Is

- The Living Independently for Elders (LIFE) Center is a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) program, owned and operated by the University of Pennsylvania's School of Nursing, which provides alternatives to nursing home admissions for West Philadelphia residents. Teams of health care providers manage the complex medical, functional and psycho-social problems faced by elderly clients.

What It Does

- Delivers comprehensive care services through a team of primary care nurse practitioners and physicians who have privileges at the University of Pennsylvania Health System (UPHS).
- Currently provides meals, recreational activities, nursing and health care, medications, treatment, physical therapy, art and music therapy and personal care services like laundry, showers and hair care to more than 300 clients (more than 500 have been served since the 1998 launch). The program grows on average by 3 members per month.
- Provides round-the-clock services to poor urban residents who would otherwise need nursing home care. Clients are transported from home by LIFE vans to the LIFE Center and health appointments. At the LIFE Center, they engage in recreational activities and received care and meals. Care is provided at home on an as needed basis based on a plan of care that includes the family and older adult. The LIFE Center is responsible for care 24/7.
- Promotes independence and the highest levels of functioning while allowing choice and dignity for the members and their families.
- Serves as a model for integration of practice, education and research, not only in nursing but in health care.
- Serves as a model of integrating fiscal responsibility, access to service, and quality of care using a Medicare/Medicaid capitated per member per month rate.

Where To Learn More

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How It Stands Out

- LIFE members are admitted with preventable hospitalizations at a low rate of 138 per 1,000 – only about 2/3 the rate of those in Pennsylvania nursing home facilities.
- Saves the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare 15-20 percent annually in Medicaid reimbursement costs.
- Is completely self-supporting and fiscally sound; earns reinvestment funds for the Penn School of Nursing.
- Nursing home services are reduced by number of admissions and length of stay.
- Care in hospital is provided by or coordinated by the LIFE nurses, social workers and physicians ensuring continuity of care delivered by a team familiar to the member and their family.