

Health Policy Newsletter

Volume 13 Number 3

September, 2000

Article 2

The Jefferson Health System (JHS) Consortium for Medical Directors in Long Term Care

Elizabeth White, MD*

* Jefferson Health System

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Suggested Citation:

White E. The Jefferson Health System Consortium for Medical Directors in Long Term Care. *Health Policy Newsletter* 2000; 13(3): Article 2. Retrieved [date] from <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/hpn/vol13/iss3/2>.

The Jefferson Health System (JHS) Consortium for Medical Directors in Long Term Care

The Jefferson Health System (JHS) Consortium for Medical Directors in Long Term Care (Consortium) was established in January 1998 by JHS Senior Health, to support JHS physicians who serve as medical directors or lead physicians in nursing homes, continuing care retirement communities, subacute units and assisted living facilities across the Delaware Valley.

Recognizing the importance of planning to meet the needs of the rapidly growing elderly population in its service area, the JHS is in the process of developing relationships with local long term care providers with the goal-just recently reached-of access to 6,800 beds by the end of 2000. Most of these affiliations entail the placement of a Jefferson physician (including independent practitioners with ties to any of the member hospitals) as medical director. This is in recognition of the central role of the medical director in overseeing and ensuring the quality of medical services in the long term care facility, particularly in face of the increasing acuity, diversity of care needs and consumer expectations in most long term care settings.

Membership in the Consortium, now totaling approximately 40 physicians, is open to any JHS physician who is involved in Long Term Care in a leadership role. Currently the Consortium, which is directed by the JHS Medical Director of Senior Health, provides a forum for education as well as discussion and problem solving of issues encountered in the daily routine of the nursing home medical director.

Members of the Consortium plan the educational programming. Six seminars are offered annually, focusing on a mix of clinical and administrative topics pertinent to the medical director's role. For example, this fall a presentation on wound care is planned, which will cover both latest advances in treatment as well as institution of preventive programs in a facility. Other topics have included an update on the pharmacological treatment of Alzheimer's disease; detection and prevention of abuse in the nursing home; and hospice care. All seminars are approved for American Medical Association (AMA) Continuing Medical Education (CME) Category-one credits and are acceptable towards certification and re-certification for the Certificate of Medical Director (CMD) offered by the American Medical Director's Association (AMDA), the premier national organization representing physicians in long term care management. In addition, the Consortium plans to develop a program on medicine in the nursing home with the Primary Care College at Thomas Jefferson University (TJU).

The Consortium members cover a wide geographic area, mirroring the locations of the JHS members and affiliates. This is a major barrier to regular on-site physician participation in educational meetings and information exchange. In response, the consortium has implemented the following strategies:

1. Meeting sites are being rotated among central locations - the TJU Ford Road Campus and Consortium member nursing homes across the Delaware Valley.

2. A member directory listing specialty and area of expertise in long term care medicine/administration has been published, allowing quick access to a member who is equipped to answer a specific question.
3. An E-newsletter is being planned that will summarize information pertinent to the medical director's daily clinical and administrative duties; for example, changes in state or federal regulations; clinical research specific to the long term care patient; reports of successful implementation of patient care protocols; as well as information on JHS activities of value, such as Premier Years, (see March issue of *Office of Health Policy Newsletter*), and Case management initiatives.

At the request of several Consortium members, plans for the coming year include the development of templates for policies and procedures for clinical services in the nursing home that can be shared and amended by JHS Medical Directors as necessary in their facilities.

About the Author

For further information on the JHS Medical Directors Consortium in Long Term Care, the American Medical Directors' Association, or the Pennsylvania Medical Directors' Association (state affiliate), please contact Dr. Elizabeth White, Medical Director, Senior Health, JHS, at 610-526-8324, or Whitee@MLHS.org.