

Title: Dementia Care Specialist Workforce in California: Role, Practice, Training and Demand

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Issue: More than five million older adults in the U.S. are currently living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD), and the prevalence of ADRD is expected to rise to 16 million by 2050. Dementia care specialists (DCSs) have been proposed as a solution in California aimed at keeping older individuals with ADRD in their homes and assisting with care coordination and supporting caregivers. This study characterizes the roles, practice, training and current demand for DCSs.

Methods: Key informant interviews were conducted with health plans administrators, DCSs, and project staff with expertise in dementia care coordination.

Findings: Nine health plans in California currently have trained DCSs providing care coordination. We present findings on several key factors (e.g., policy, training, and institutional support) that may impact DCS's role and practice. DCS represent a novel way to train an existing workforce to effectively provide care coordination for individuals with ADRD and their caregivers.

Discussion: Further efforts should be directed at translating evidence-based practices for dementia care coordination into health systems and to evaluate promising dementia care management practices. Future research on the impact of policy and workforce training and capability are needed to ensure effective care coordination for individuals with ADRD and their family caregivers.

Key Words: Dementia care workforce, interdisciplinary care teams, care coordination, family caregivers

HWRC Website Link:

https://healthworkforce.ucsf.edu/sites/healthworkforce.ucsf.edu/files/REPORT_DCS_Report_FINAL_2118.pdf
