

Title: Geriatrician Roles and the Value of Geriatrics in an Evolving Healthcare System

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Objective/Issue: In the context of a growing shortage of practicing geriatricians, we use this 2-stage project to examine current and emerging roles of geriatricians as members of healthcare teams across different care settings.

Data/Setting: Qualitative data from key informant interviews (n=21).

Design/Methods: We conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with field experts in geriatrics, including practicing geriatricians, academic researchers, clinician educators, healthcare philanthropists, and representatives from professional geriatric societies.

Results/Findings: Geriatrics should be seen as a set of principles that can inform all care provided to older adults, by all types of providers. Geriatricians work in a wide variety of professional roles in many types of healthcare organizations and institutions, including at the highest levels of administration. Healthcare organizations increasingly are focused on utilizing geriatricians in roles that amplify their expertise. Healthcare organizations are adapting to the emerging value-based payments environment and implementing care models designed to provide higher quality, lower cost care to older adults, as compared with the fee-for-service system.

Conclusions/Discussion: Healthcare systems and organizations are reorganizing the delivery of geriatric care to address the persistent shortage of geriatrician specialist physicians and seek to utilize this scarce resource to both amplify geriatricians' expertise and provide higher quality, lower cost care. Geriatricians continue to provide direct care to patients but increasingly do so as part of interdisciplinary teams, which facilitates integrated, comprehensive care.

While the role of academic clinician educator will always be necessary and fundamental, a key role for geriatricians will be to educate non-geriatrician providers in geriatrics principles. As value-based care continues to incentivize the adoption of innovative geriatric care models, organizations will rely on geriatricians to lead efforts to implement them.

The expectation that geriatricians will play a substantial leadership role in helping to transform the delivery of care to older adults will require changes to training, payment systems, and performance measures.

Key Words: Geriatrician workforce, geriatric care, geriatrics, older, interdisciplinary, care teams

HWRC Website Link:

<https://healthworkforce.ucsf.edu/sites/healthworkforce.ucsf.edu/files/GERIATRICreport7319FINAL.pdf>