CALL FOR PAPERS | SPECIAL ISSUE: Workforce Issues in Long-Term Care

Workforce challenges are a persistent feature of the long-term care landscape. The industry depends on a complex and ever growing myriad of direct care workers and faces an increasing acuity of care needs and chronic worker shortages. Workforce issues inherently intersect with the provider and policy landscapes. For providers, the workforce is their largest cost. For policy makers, many facets of the workforce serve as levers that influence quality of care. Moreover, workforce issues intersect with larger social issues. For example, immigration policy influences the long-term care workforce, as do minimum wages in the service industries and the larger economic environment. In short, workforce issues are the most significant challenges facing the long-term care industry.

The research community has provided insight into many important workforce areas. Topics that have received considerable research attention include the influence of specific workers such as ratios of registered nurses to total nursing staff, overall staffing levels, use of agency staff, and aggregate workforce outcomes such as turnover and retention. There has also been important work on education and training as well as the effects of different care models on cost and quality. Yet, given the unprecedented influence of workforce issues on long-term care, more knowledge is needed in these and related areas. We know staffing levels are important, but we do not know what level is optimal. We know workforce retention is important, but we have no commonly used metric for retention. We know workforce training is essential, but we do not know the most effective approaches to worker training or how to increase the transfer of knowledge from training to work environments. In the home- and community-based setting, little is known about the relative impact of consumer-directed care compared with the traditional agency model. With this Special Issue, The Gerontologist seeks to highlight workforce research that can enhance the quality of care for older people and support both providers and policy makers in this endeavor.

The articles we seek will move knowledge in this field forward. As with all papers submitted to The Gerontologist, they should have a clear conceptual or theoretical framework. In keeping with the applied research mission of The Gerontologist, articles should identify implications for policy or practice. Areas of long-term care of interest include nursing facilities, assisted living, and home care. Workers of interest include (but are not limited to) top management, caregivers, and clinicians.

To avoid duplicative topics and to enable us to develop a comprehensive issue, a 250-word abstract describing the paper’s intent should be submitted. Please be sure to include all author names and contact information. Our team of editors will identify abstracts of interest and selected authors will be invited to submit full manuscripts. Full manuscripts will be evaluated using The Gerontologist’s usual peer-review process.

Before submission, authors should carefully read the Author Guidelines for The Gerontologist located at oxford.ly/TG_ITAs. Manuscript formats include Research Articles (qualitative and quantitative), Intervention Research, Brief Reports, and Forums—and (published online only) Review Articles and Measurement Articles. Abstracts should be submitted electronically at mc.manuscriptcentral.com/tg according to the following timetable: