

UNCOVERING PET ISSUES: A SURVEY OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH OLDER ADULTS AND CARE PARTNERS

Jessica Bibbo,¹ Justin Johnson,¹ Jennifer Drost,² and Margaret Sanders,³ 1. *Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, Cleveland, Ohio, United States*, 2. *Summa Health System, Akron, Ohio, United States*, 3. *Northeast Ohio Medical University, ROOTSTOWN, Ohio, United States*

Pets can play an important role in older adults' health behaviors and decisions. However, the degree to which these issues are encountered or addressed by professionals working with this population remains unknown. An interdisciplinary (e.g., healthcare, social services) sample of professionals (N=72, 93.05% female, Mage=48.82, SDage=12.57) completed an online survey focused on the pet ownership issues they have encountered while working with older adults, persons with dementia, and care partners. The professionals (n=66) estimated 42.86% of their clients had been pet owners, and 45.58% regularly asked their clients about pets. Issues raised to the professionals varied by type of client. Older adults most often brought up exercising the pet, routine veterinary care, and the financial aspect of ownership (all 37.50%). Persons with dementia most often discussed accessing pet care items (12.50%), exercising the pet (9.72%), and basic pet care (8.33%). Care partners brought up basic pet care (33.33%), planning for the pet due to their care recipients' housing transition (26.38%), and exercising the pet (25.00%). Professionals reported talking to clients about planning for the pet due to housing transition, concerns about falling, and concerns about the pet's behavior (all 31.94%). The professionals (n=69) were very favorable toward pet ownership in general (M=4.43, SD=0.78) (1=extremely unfavorable, 5=extremely favorable), less favorable about older adult pet ownership (M=4.15, SD=0.72, p=.002), and even less favorable about persons with dementia owning pets (M=3.51, SD=0.93, p<.001). The results provide evidence that pet ownership issues are likely encountered in geriatric service settings and may shape healthy aging.

Session 2320 (Symposium)

SUPPORT FROM A DISTANCE: HOW HOME CARE AGENCIES INFLUENCE PAID CAREGIVING IN THE HOME

Chair: Emily Franzosa

Discussant: Robyn Stone

Paid caregivers (e.g., home health aides, personal care attendants, and other direct care workers) who care for functionally impaired older adults in the home frequently report that while rewarding, their work is logistically, physically, and emotionally demanding. Unlike direct care workers in institutional settings, paid caregivers work with care recipients one-on-one in private settings and often have limited contact with or support from their employers. These factors contribute to high workforce turnover and may impact the quality of patient care. In this symposium, we explore ways that home care agency policies and practices influence the experience of giving and receiving care in the home. First, Bryant et al. describe the range of agency-based models and the impact of workplace design in creating supportive working environments. Next, Fabius et al. explore characteristics

of direct care agencies across Maryland, with implications for worker training and support. Reckrey et al. describe the differing perceptions of aides, caregivers and providers around the role agencies play in defining paid caregivers' roles, and how this may lead to conflict within the caregiving team. Finally, in the context of COVID-19, Franzosa et al. examine communication and coordination between Veterans Affairs-paid agencies and home health aides during the pandemic, while Tsui et al. present a case study of an agency's efforts to support paid caregivers through group support calls. Together, these studies highlight challenges in the structure, organization and perceptions of home care agencies, and identify potential avenues for agencies to support paid caregivers and their clients.

JOB DESIGN FOR HOME CARE WORK: PERSPECTIVES FROM EMPLOYERS AND HOME CARE AIDES

Natasha Bryant,¹ Robyn Stone,² and Alex Hennessa,¹

1. *LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston, Washington, District of Columbia, United States*, 2. *LeadingAge, Washington, District of Columbia, United States*

Home-based care is a rapidly growing sector becoming more important to individuals, families, providers, and payers. The ways in which agencies create the work environment for home care aides who are essentially in their clients' homes is not adequately documented and may be changing rapidly with labor market innovations. This qualitative study describes how different home care business models (e.g., non-profit VNAs, for-profit franchises, uber-style matching, worker-owned coops) address job design and the overall work environment for home care aides. Interviews with employers and focus groups with home care aides examine workplace practices, how work is organized and supported when the workforce is virtual and the workplace is a client's home, and the perceived attributes of a positive workplace environment across business models. This study fills significant knowledge gaps about home care workplace design and the role of agencies in creating a supportive environment.

CHARACTERISTICS, CHALLENGES, AND SUPPORT OF MARYLAND'S DIRECT CARE WORKERS: FINDINGS FROM A STATEWIDE AGENCY SURVEY

Chanee Fabius,¹ Deirdre Johnston,² and Jennifer Wolff,¹

1. *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, Maryland, United States*, 2. *Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland, United States*

Direct care workers (e.g., personal care aides) are paid health care professionals who provide hands on assistance with daily activities to persons with disabilities in home, community, and institutional settings. Many workers are employed by direct care agencies, but little is known or understood about the organizational attributes of these agencies. We describe results from a mixed mode (postal mail, electronic, and telephone) survey of n=1112 residential care agency administrators in Maryland to assess organizational (e.g., size, supplemental services) and direct care worker (e.g., training) characteristics. Preliminary findings indicate that half of direct care agencies' revenue comes from Medicaid and roughly 40% of clients are living with dementia. Administrators report challenges managing dementia-related behaviors (70%), communicating with persons living with