

What impact will these trends have on the overall quality of care in the state of...

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What impact will these trends have on the overall quality of care in the of Pennsylvania, and what are the future solutions? Lecturer: Institution:

Course:

Date:

Impacts of the current trends of health care in the state of Pennsylvania on the quality of care

The state of Pennsylvania has seen a number of changes in its health care sector over the past few years. These changes include: a decreasing number of licensed hospitals, decreasing number of physicians, financial constraints and the degradation of the existing health care systems. Based on that, below are the explained trends that are on focus with regard to the impacts on the overall quality of care.

Decrease in the number of licensed hospitals: According to the data provided by HAP (2014), it was noted that the number of licensed hospitals in the state were on a decreasing trend by the year. For example, the total number of non- acute and speciality hospitals in 2003 were 85. These numbers progressed over the years and in 2012, the total number of non- acute and speciality hospitals in the state was 92. This meant that there was an 8% growth over the years. When compared to the total number of general acute licensed hospitals the numbers in 2003 were at 181. However, over the years the numbers decreased to 158 in 2012. This translated to a 13% decline in the numbers of general acute licensed hospitals in the state.

Based on these figures, it meant that more hospitals were gearing to offer speciality care to patients as compared to general care. Hence, efficiency in general care was compromised as the fewer licensed hospitals that had

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remained were the ones handling all patients who had minor health challenges.

Decreasing number of physicians: The state has experienced a decreasing number of physicians over the years in a number of specialities. According to HAP (2014), it was established that the numbers of physicians in areas such as: emergency medicine; paediatrics; family practice; general surgery; orthopaedic surgery; internal medicine; radiology; cardiology; obstetrics and gynaecology had decreased in the state. In addition to that, it was also mentioned that by 2015, the existing shortage of qualified physicians would quadruple to approximately 39, 600 physicians. Moreover, it was also stated that the shortage of RN specialists would reach approximately 22, 600 by 2017. The impacts of these trends are that the overall quality of care and efficiency of disbursed care to patients in the state has already been affected. If no action is undertaken soon, these trends could cripple the health care state in Pennsylvania in the coming years.

Degradation of the existing health care systems: The existing health care systems in the state of Pennsylvania are not reliable. That is, the hospitals as well as the existing health care systems had more than \$1. 037 billion in care that had not been compensated for in the financial year of 2012. This was noted to be a 53% increase since 2007 where uncompensated care and reliability on charity care led to a bad debt of approximately \$0. 677 billion (HAP, 2014). The impact of this trend led to an increased number of uninsured individuals in the state. This meant that in the event these individuals needed urgent care, it would be very expensive for them since they lack insurance. Moreover, the lack of funds and dependability on charity

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funds contributed to a degradation of the health care services in the state. Financial constraints: More to the issue of funds, the data from HAP (2014) revealed that one fifth of the acute care hospitals in the state had extreme financial problems while others were operating entirely on charity money. In addition, 22% of these hospitals had a negative operating margin while 20% of these hospitals had a negative total margin. The impact of these trends was that the efficiency of care being disbursed was minimal and not reliable. Hence this negatively affected the quality of care in the state.

What are the future solutions?

The future solutions to these problems include:

Increased investments: These should be undertaken so as to prevent the over reliance on charity money. It will also help to reduce the bad debt that a number of hospitals in the state have.

Improvement in the existing health care systems: Health care systems such as Medicare and Medicaid should be reformed so as to allow more individuals to be compensated and insured. As such, citizens of the state shall have affordable health care which will also contribute to the quality of care.

Investment in electronic health records (EHRs): EHRs help the practice to increase operations efficiency. Moreover, these systems also contain patient's information which can be easily accessed from anywhere as well as integrated with other health care systems from other hospitals so as to maximize on care efficiency.

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