

WSSC 2009 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

LONG TERM CARE

PRINCIPLES

There must be a growing conviction that a fully human civilization shows respect and love for the Elderly, so that despite their diminishing strength they feel a vital part of society.In addition to the obvious psychological need of the elderly themselves, the most natural place to spend one's old age continues to be the environment in which one feels most "at home", among family members, acquaintances and friends, where one can still make oneself useful.

Pope John Paul II, 1999

The preferential option for the poor and vulnerable includes all who are marginalized in our nation and beyond -- unborn children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and terminally ill, and victims of injustice and oppression.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB, 2008

LONG TERM CARE SERVICES: Seniors and people with disabilities need appropriate high quality supportive services in the setting that best meets their needs. All Catholic Charities in Washington State provide a variety of in home care services in partnership with the State. Home care services, senior nutrition, and volunteer chore services are the largest programs.

Home Care: It is estimated that there are currently more than 9 million seniors and people with disabilities who need long term care. Most are cared for at home by family and other loved ones. Approximately 30% need supportive services provided by others. These services to people who have chronic illnesses are designed to help meet health and personal needs such as dressing, bathing, and meal preparation.

Senior Nutrition: A recent study indicated one in nine seniors is at risk of hunger in the U.S. Senior nutrition programs alleviate the risk by providing nutritious meals and other services.

Volunteer Chore Services (VCS): VCS helps elders and adults with disabilities remain independent in their own homes through a network of caring community members. VCS collaborates with faith-based congregations, civic groups, schools and community businesses to provide volunteers at no charge. VCS serves as a safety net for those individuals who do not qualify for state-paid chore assistance.

UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS: Many innovative and new programs have been developed including services to assist people whose needs have been historically underserved – such as African Americans, Native Americans and people living in rural areas. Advocates will work to ensure services are available to all.

AGENCY SUPPORTS: Affording seniors and people with disabilities the choice of home care and community-based services actually saves public dollars. The state needs high quality community partners, like Catholic Charities agencies who recruit home care workers, train and supervise them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSSC SUPPORTS:

- Maintaining home care programs, including home care services, senior nutrition programs, and Volunteer Chore Services
- Funding for agencies that partner with the state
- Funding efforts to expand service to assist underserved people