

Setting the Stage – Complex Older Adult Populations

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Ontario's population is aging and Ontario's acute health care system is responding to an increased volume of acute health care events among older adults with complex health care needs. Such acute interventions are now able to increase survival among people with previously fatal conditions such as heart failure and stroke and as a result, the prevalence of age-related chronic conditions and functional impairment is increasing. This overview presents some of the challenges of managing individuals with multiple chronic conditions and highlights the intensity and variety of health care services as well as the overall health care system costs based on Ontario health care utilization data. While there are provincial programs and resources for primary care, community home care and hospital care, there are no widespread programs to coordinate care across these 'silos' of care. The population data show that individuals with multiple chronic conditions are seeing many different providers across the system without clear programs to optimize their care across providers. This presents a new challenge and opportunity for improved management of older adults with multiple chronic conditions and functional impairment in the community.

Biography:

Dr. Wodchis is Associate Professor at the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto. He is also a Research Scientist at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, an Adjunct Scientist at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and Principal Investigator for the Health System Performance Research Network. His main research interests are health economics and financing, health care policy evaluation, and long-term care. Dr Wodchis is currently leading a second province-wide research study called The Determinants of Quality in Ontario Long Term Care. Other research projects include identifying and developing performance measures for complex populations with chronic conditions who transition through multiple health care sectors, health system performance measurement and measuring return on investment for interventions in the health system. Past significant publications include quality of life measurement for older populations, incentives and government payment for physicians and long-term care including pay for performance, and the relationship between quality and cost. He holds a Bachelor of Mathematics (Waterloo), Master's in both Gerontology (Waterloo) and Economics (Michigan) and earned his doctorate in Health Services Organization and Policy (Health Economics) at the University of Michigan.