

EXPERTS ANNOUNCE FRAMEWORK TO HELP OLDER ADULTS AND THEIR FAMILIES NAVIGATE LONG-TERM CARE OPTIONS

Leading policy experts, long-term care providers, caregiver advocates and industry professionals call for navigation tools to support older adult and family long-term care decision-making

Leading experts in the field of aging policy and senior housing and care released [a report](#) that highlights the lack of infrastructure to help guide older adults and their families to long-term care services and calls on industry and policymakers to create navigational hubs to help families understand their long-term care needs and select the best options for them. Published by Nexus Insights—a think tank advancing the well-being of older adults through innovative models of housing, community and healthcare—the report, *Where Am I, Where Do I Go: The Missing Entry Point to Long-Term Care Solutions for Older Adults and Their Caregivers*, explains the need for the navigation hubs, their primary responsibilities, and criteria for their success.

“Older adults and their families enter a maze of twists and turns, dead ends, and wrong way streets when a life crisis forces them to consider their care options,” said Robert Kramer, founder of Nexus Insights and former CEO and strategic advisor at the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing & Care. “In many cases, critical decisions about long-term care must be made quickly, with scarce information or resources, let alone supportive guidance to assist them in their time of crisis.”

According to the report’s authors, solving the issue of inadequate information and guidance about long-term care settings, supports and services requires navigation hubs with staff that help older adults and their families discover and assess their options, educate them on the services and costs of each option, select and connect the best option based on their preferences, and reevaluate their needs as their health status and finances change.

Report authors suggest that action must be taken soon, as changing demographics, longer life expectancies, and a shifting political landscape will make the long-term care maze even more difficult to navigate.

“The factors that shape care decisions vary from family to family, but all families need an easy-to-use, accessible hub of information that clearly communicates the options that are available to them in their community,” said Anne Tumlinson, CEO of ATI Advisory and a contributor to the report. “With a growing number of older adults needing care, we have to act now to build the care infrastructure families need.”

In addition to the functions of the proposed navigation hub model, the report identifies seven criteria that should define it, including that it should be accessible to all, provide consistent services nationwide, be focused locally with a deep understanding of each community’s programs and providers, be visible and known among the targeted user population, be free of incentives to promote specific service providers, offer unbiased advice and provide full service so that it enables each user to make a selection for their care and follow through on it.

“Older adults, their families and caregivers cannot wait for lawmakers and government agencies to build the comprehensive long-term care system we so desperately need,” said Caroline Pearson, senior vice president of health care strategy at NORC at the University of Chicago and a contributor to the report. “The reality is that long-term care services in this country are a patchwork of providers and funders, and we must act to give families accessible, trusted and neutral advice to help them navigate through the morass.”

The report is based on a Nexus Insights-sponsored discussion held earlier this year attended by experts and luminaries in the field of aging services and long-term care. The host committee and participants included:

Host Committee

- **David Grabowski, PhD**, professor, Harvard Medical School, fellow, Nexus Insights
- **Bob Kramer**, founder & fellow, Nexus Insights, co-founder, former CEO & strategic advisor, National Investment Center for Seniors Housing & Care (NIC)
- **Caroline Pearson**, senior vice president, health care strategy, NORC at the University of Chicago, fellow, Nexus Insights
- **Sarah Thomas**, CEO, Delight by Design/MezTal, fellow, Nexus Insights
- **Anne Tumlinson**, CEO, ATI Advisory, fellow, Nexus Insights

Discussion Participants

- **Gretchen E. Alkema, PhD**, former vice president, policy and communications, The SCAN Foundation
- **Alice Bonner, PhD**, senior advisor for aging, IHI, and adjunct faculty, Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing
- **Ryan Frederick**, founder & CEO, Smart Living 360, fellow, Nexus Insights (facilitator)
- **Lindsay Jurist-Rosner**, CEO, Wellthy
- **Ruth Katz**, senior vice president for policy, LeadingAge
- **Sean Kelly**, president & CEO, The Kendal Corporation
- **Suzanne Kunkel, PhD**, executive director, Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University
- **Katy Lanz**, chief strategy officer, Personal Care Medical Associates
- **Brian Petranick**, group president, Neighborly
- **Cheryl L. Phillips, M.D.**, president and CEO, Special Needs Plan Alliance
- **Paul Saucier**, director, Office of Aging & Disability Services, Maine Department of Health and Human Services
- **John Schall**, CEO, Caregiver Action Network
- **Bill Thomas**, chief independence officer, Lifespark, fellow, Nexus Insights

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