

# Research on Enhancing Community Elderly Care Service Capability and Effective Paths

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## Abstract

**With the continuous advancement of China's aging population, the importance of community elderly care services is becoming increasingly prominent. However, current community elderly care services still face various problems, and the quality and level of services urgently need to be improved. The soundness and sustainability of the community elderly care service system still need to be improved. This article first delves into the current situation of community elderly care in China from the perspectives of policy support, service level, and talent cultivation. Then, point out the main problems of community elderly care services in China from the aspects of resources, services, technology, law, etc. Finally, propose effective paths to enhance the capacity of community elderly care services.**

## Keywords

**Community Elderly Care; Service Capability; Upgrade Path.**

## 1. Introduction

With the continuous advancement of China's aging population, the importance of community elderly care services is becoming increasingly prominent. The growth of the elderly population has led to a sharp increase in the demand for elderly care services in society, and communities, as the main place for elderly people to live, bear the responsibility of providing basic living services, medical care, entertainment activities and other needs. However, current community elderly care services still face various problems, and the quality and level of services urgently need to be improved. The soundness and sustainability of the community elderly care service system still need to be improved.

The improvement of community elderly care services involves multiple levels, including policy support, talent cultivation, technological innovation, and social participation. In order to better understand and solve these problems, it is necessary to conduct systematic research, deeply explore the essence and influencing factors of the problems, propose effective paths and countermeasures, in order to promote the improvement of China's community elderly care service capacity and better meet the diverse needs of the elderly.

In the current context, community elderly care services are facing a series of problems. Insufficient resources, uneven services, low service quality, inconsistent standards for elderly care services, opaque information on elderly care services, and lack of technological support have hindered the development of community elderly care services. The living standards and health needs of the elderly are becoming increasingly diversified, and the requirements for community elderly care services are also becoming more complex.

With the intensification of population aging, China's population and family structure are tending towards miniaturization. The 421 family structure has led to a weakening of the family's elderly care function, and there are a large number of empty nest elderly and elderly people who have lost their only child. With the in-depth exploration of elderly care issues in society, the elderly care model is also constantly changing and upgrading. In order to improve the living standards of elderly people living at home and reduce the burden on families, the feedback based family elderly care method that has lasted for thousands of years has undergone changes, and the elderly care method is slowly moving towards socialization.

At present, the main elderly care methods in China are home care, community care, and institutional care, among which home care is still the mainstream. Under the desire of the majority of elderly people to stay at home for retirement, communities will also become an important scene for future "Chinese style elderly care". Relying on the community, improving the ability of community-based home-based elderly care, and establishing community-based home-based elderly care methods are the development direction of a sound socialized elderly care system, which has become an inevitable choice for urban elderly care in China. In terms of policy, the country has also been advocating for the implementation of "home-based elderly care as the foundation, community-based elderly care as the support, and institutional elderly care as a supplement" in practice.

In response to the serious phenomenon of aging population in China, the 18th National Congress report proposes to integrate the basic pension insurance and basic medical insurance systems for urban and rural residents, achieve national pooling of basic pension funds, and establish a mechanism for determining social security benefits and normal adjustment that takes into account all types of personnel. The report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposes suggestions to solve the current situation of elderly care in China, including "accelerating the construction of elderly care service facilities and establishing a social service network covering rural areas", and community elderly care precisely reflects this concept. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang also stated that by 2020, a diversified elderly care service system covering both urban and rural areas will be fully established, with home-based services, community-based services, and institutional support. This will turn the "sunset red" service for billions of elderly people into a thriving sunrise industry.

From the attention and analysis of the elderly care issues by state organs and leaders, it can be seen that community elderly care will become the mainstream of the elderly care model, because it has many advantages: professional personnel to take care of the elderly, high degree of specialization, convenient handling of affairs, low cost, and other advantages. The aging population has become an urgent problem to be solved in China's social development. The resulting elderly care service industry has enormous development space and potential.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Domestic Research Status

In response to the serious phenomenon of aging population in China, the 18th National Congress report proposes to integrate the basic pension insurance and basic medical insurance systems for urban and rural residents, achieve national pooling of basic pension funds, and establish a mechanism for determining and adjusting social security benefits for all types of personnel. The report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposes suggestions to solve the current situation of elderly care in China, including "accelerating the construction of elderly care facilities and establishing a social service network covering rural areas", and community elderly care precisely reflects this concept. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang also stated that by 2020, a diversified elderly care service system covering both urban and rural areas will be fully built, with home-based services, community-based services, and institutional

support. This will turn the "sunset red" industry, which serves billions of future people, into a thriving sunrise industry.

At the just held 12th National People's Congress, Premier Li Keqiang delivered a government work report, which greatly encouraged people in the health and elderly care industry. The government work report proposed a plan for the issue of elderly care during the Two Sessions. Premier Li emphasized the development of elderly care, health, tourism, culture and other services as the main focus of expanding domestic demand in his government work report, which is very awesome. These four services are closely related to the elderly care industry.

On September 3, the team led by Professor Wang Weiqing from the Endocrine Metabolism Department of Ruijin Hospital affiliated to Shanghai Jiaotong University School of Medicine, Shanghai Institute of Endocrine and Metabolic Diseases, and the National Clinical Medical Research Center for Metabolic Diseases published a newsletter in the Lancet magazine, "Protecting older people: a high priority during the COVID-19 pandemic", which focused on the importance and feasible strategies of protecting the elderly during the COVID-19.

The current situation of elderly care in China is worrying. Private nursing homes are expensive, public nursing homes are seriously insufficient, and there are many problems with family elderly care. Unable to afford to live, unable to move in, and where to live are becoming the elderly care concerns of urban residents. Social development should be both good and fast, requiring both GDP and buildings, as well as the simultaneous advancement of social security and public services. Sometimes slowing down may not necessarily be a good thing, as it can help us make up for our shortcomings, as it determines the quality of economic development.

On December 12th, according to the "Huashan Infection" WeChat account, Zhang Wenhong and others released an article titled "Protecting Family and Getting Out of the Epidemic" on the 12th. It was mentioned that, for the public, COVID-19 will eventually become a common respiratory infectious disease. Protecting elderly patients will be of utmost importance in responding to the first wave of epidemic peaks.

In recent years, with the promotion of the healthy aging strategy, China's elderly health service system has developed rapidly, and pilot and promotion work has been carried out, including the integration of medical care and elderly care, long-term care, and palliative care. In 2019, eight departments including the National Health Commission, the Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Animal Husbandry and Education, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs jointly issued the Guiding Opinions on Establishing a Comprehensive Elderly Health Service System (Yiguowei Elderly Health Service No. C2019761), which clarified that the elderly health service system includes six aspects: health education, prevention and health care, disease diagnosis and treatment, rehabilitation nursing, long-term care, and hospice care. However, overall, there are still imbalances and inadequacies in the development of China's elderly health service system. Especially in response to the current epidemic, practical experience has shown Qiu Ming that health information management, health education, prevention, and rehabilitation nursing play a crucial role in responding to major public health emergencies. However, the development of the public health service system focuses on disease diagnosis and treatment, neglecting health education. The problems of preventive health care and rehabilitation care services are still prominent. 6 Such uneven streets and insufficient development also reflect the problems in China's social governance for the elderly. The outbreak of the COVID-19 is also a test of China's social governance capacity for the elderly.

In recent years, the Chinese government has also actively promoted the construction of policies and regulations for home-based elderly care services. In 2015, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Promoting the Integration of Medical and Health Services and Elderly Care Services", proposing to accelerate the development of home-based elderly care services, strengthen the construction of care centers and medical nursing centers between

communities. In addition, local governments have successively introduced relevant policies and regulations to promote the rapid development of home-based elderly care services.

## 2.2. Abroad Research Status

Abroad, various countries have formulated a series of policies to support the development of community elderly care services. For example, Sweden has achieved a better elderly care environment for the elderly at home and in the community by strengthening community elderly care service policies. The Swedish government has provided financial support to encourage communities to provide comprehensive elderly care services, including medical, rehabilitation, cultural and entertainment support.

Australia adopts a "community care package" model, which provides personalized care and support services for the elderly to help them better integrate into the community. In addition, the Australian government also provides diverse services to the elderly through various community support programs to meet the differentiated needs of individuals.

The service models of community elderly care services in foreign countries are also quite diverse. In Canada, community elderly care services are mainly achieved through the establishment of community health centers, day care centers, and other institutions. These centers provide various services such as medical care, nursing, rehabilitation, and social activities to help elderly people better integrate into community life.

The United States focuses on home-based elderly care, providing medical, daily care, rehabilitation and other services through the provision of caregivers, enabling elderly people to enjoy their later years at home. At the same time, the United States has also promoted a series of community volunteer service projects to promote social participation and mental health among the elderly.

The quality standards for community elderly care services have been clearly and meticulously defined. The UK has established a comprehensive elderly care service evaluation system to evaluate community elderly care service providers and ensure that their services reach a certain level of quality. Germany, on the other hand, establishes nursing quality standards to certify and rate elderly care institutions to ensure the safety and efficiency of services.

Some foreign countries are vigorously promoting technological innovation in community elderly care services. The Netherlands has improved the intelligence level of community elderly care services by introducing intelligent auxiliary devices, such as home monitoring systems and remote medical services. New Zealand emphasizes social participation and the subjectivity of the elderly in community elderly care services abroad through digital technology. Norway encourages community autonomy and the participation of elderly people in community decision-making, enabling them to better play a positive role in community elderly care services. Switzerland promotes mutual support and social interaction among elderly people by establishing mutual aid organizations for the elderly.

Home care services are one of the important policies in many developed countries. In Europe and North America, governments have formulated relevant policies and regulations to support the provision and development of home-based elderly care services. For example, the Home Care Services Act in the Netherlands proposes to provide comprehensive home care services for the elderly, including living care, medical care, and spiritual comfort. The Elderly Act in the United States emphasizes the importance of communities in providing elderly care services and proposes a community-based service model.

The Wall Street Journal recently published an article entitled "Elder Abuse Spreads Stoked by the Pandemic", which pointed out that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the elderly in the United States is far more than virus infection, and their cases of abuse have also risen sharply. This also highlights the importance of elderly care policies in the context of the pandemic.

Catherine Cook is the Chief Operating Officer of a company providing mental health services for the elderly in Keane, New Hampshire, USA. She said, "Elderly people are becoming increasingly anxious, angry, nervous, and anxious because this situation has been going on for too long.", "I have never seen so many elderly people say they have no hope," according to an article on the website of U.S. News & World Report. The concern of American elderly people stems from the harsh reality that throughout the pandemic, the risk of severe illness and death among elderly people is much higher than that of other age groups. As of February this year, 93% of the deaths from COVID-19 in the United States were middle-aged and elderly people over 50 years old.

The Washington Post published an article on November 28, "The elderly are more likely to die in COVID-19, causing" acceptable loss "controversy". According to the article, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a plague of the elderly, and nine out of ten deaths in COVID-19 in the United States now are elderly people over 65 years old, which has re-triggered the debate about what is "acceptable loss". For the Omicron vaccine booster shot, the vaccination rate among elderly people in the United States is significantly lower. The cancellation of measures such as the "mask order" may also mean that the US government is ignoring key populations.

### **3. The Current Situation of Community Elderly Care Services in China**

Community elderly care services refer to providing support for the elderly in terms of life, medical care, rehabilitation, and other aspects through community resources and services, aiming to improve their quality of life and extend their healthy lifespan. The current situation of community elderly care services in China covers multiple aspects, including policy support, service level, talent cultivation, etc. The following will delve into it from different perspectives.

#### **3.1. Policy Support**

In recent years, the Chinese government has increased its policy support for community elderly care services. By issuing a series of documents and regulations, encourage community construction and improve the level of elderly care services. The government provides financial support to community elderly care service institutions, offers a series of preferential policies for the elderly, and promotes the development of community elderly care services.

#### **3.2. Service Level**

The service level of community elderly care services is constantly improving, and the facilities of community elderly care institutions are becoming increasingly perfect, with service projects gradually becoming diversified. Elderly people can enjoy more comprehensive and professional services, including medical care, rehabilitation training, cultural and entertainment activities, etc. Some communities also offer volunteer services, providing psychological care and social support, to build a warm and harmonious living environment for the elderly.

#### **3.3. Talent Cultivation**

The improvement of community elderly care services cannot be achieved without the support of professional talents. At present, China has gradually formed a professional and high-quality talent team in the field of elderly care services. Related professional training institutions and universities have increased their efforts to cultivate talents in elderly care services, providing a solid talent foundation for community elderly care services.

#### **3.4. With the Continuous Development of Technology**

Technology is also playing an increasingly important role in community elderly care services. Some communities have introduced intelligent systems to provide comprehensive care and supervision for the lives of the elderly through monitoring devices, smart homes, and other technological means. This not only improves the efficiency of services, but also enhances the sense of security for the elderly.

## 4. The Main Problems Existing in Community Elderly Care Services in China

Face enormous challenges in the context of rapid aging society. Although significant progress has been made, there are still a series of major problems that affect the quality and sustainable development of community elderly care services. The following will discuss these issues in detail.

### 4.1. Insufficient Resources

The development of community elderly care services faces the problem of insufficient resources, including human resources, financial investment, and facility construction. In terms of human resources, there is a shortage of professional elderly care service talents, resulting in uneven quality of elderly care services. In terms of financial investment, although the government has introduced a series of supportive policies, it is still difficult to meet the growing demand for aging, resulting in incomplete elderly care service facilities and projects in some regions.

### 4.2. Uneven Service

There is a significant imbalance in community elderly care services in different regions. Some developed areas have relatively complete community elderly care service facilities and rich service projects, while some economically underdeveloped areas have relatively low levels of elderly care services due to resource scarcity. This imbalance leads to significant regional differences in elderly people access to elderly care services, particularly in rural areas far from cities.

### 4.3. Poor Service Quality

Due to a shortage of elderly care service talents and inadequate management level, some community elderly care service institutions have unsatisfactory service quality. There are problems with low professional level and inadequate service attitude in medical care, daily care, and other aspects, which result in elderly people not receiving the care and attention they deserve. At the same time, some institutions have problems such as chaotic management and poor service processes, which further reduce the quality of services.

### 4.4. Uneven Standards for Elderly Care Services

There are certain differences in the standards and norms for community elderly care services in various regions of China, and there is a lack of a unified standard system. This leads to inconsistency and incomparability of services, making it difficult for elderly people to make effective comparisons and evaluations when choosing elderly care services. A unified service standard not only helps to improve service quality, but also helps elderly people better choose elderly care services that meet their needs.

### 4.5. Non Transparency of Elderly Care Service

Information is an important issue that restricts the development of community elderly care services. Elderly people and their families often struggle to obtain sufficient and accurate information on elderly care services, and are unclear about the true situation and service quality of service institutions. This makes them lack effective basis when choosing elderly care services, and they are prone to fraud from some unscrupulous institutions, falling into problems such as poor service and safety hazards.

### 4.6. Lack of Technological Support

In the digital age, community elderly care services still face the problem of insufficient technological application. Some community elderly care service institutions in certain regions

have not fully utilized modern technological means, such as intelligent monitoring equipment and health management platforms, to improve the level of service intelligence. This affects the efficiency and convenience of services, and also restricts the innovative development of elderly care services.

#### **4.7. Neglecting the Psychological Health of the Elderly**

Community elderly care services often focus more on the daily care and medical care of the elderly, while neglecting their psychological health needs. Elderly people in the community may face problems such as loneliness, loss, and psychological pressure, requiring more psychological care and social support. The current community elderly care service system lacks sufficient support in terms of mental health.

#### **4.8. The Regulatory System is not Sound Enough**

The regulatory system for community elderly care services is relatively lagging behind, lacking a sound regulatory system to regulate and guide the development of elderly care services. In some places, there are lagging and insufficiently detailed issues in the formulation and implementation of regulations, resulting in incomplete management systems for elderly care services, lack of supervision, and difficulty in effectively regulating the elderly care service market.

Overall, community elderly care services in China face a series of main problems, including insufficient resources, uneven services, low service quality, inconsistent elderly care service standards, opaque elderly care service information, lack of technological support, neglect of the mental health of the elderly, and inadequate regulatory systems. Solving these problems requires the joint efforts of the government, social institutions, enterprises, and the whole society, strengthening policy support, increasing resource investment, improving service standards, improving service quality, promoting technological innovation, strengthening regulatory system construction, in order to achieve comprehensive improvement and sustainable development of community elderly care services.

### **5. An Effective Path to Enhance the Capacity of Community Elderly Care Services**

Enhancing the capacity of community elderly care services is a complex and urgent task, especially in the context of the rapid aging population in China. The exploration of effective paths requires comprehensive consideration of multiple aspects such as policy support, talent cultivation, technological innovation, and social participation. Here are some possible effective paths:

#### **5.1. Strengthen Policy Support**

When formulating and implementing relevant policies, the government should pay more attention to the development of community elderly care services. This includes increasing financial investment, building elderly care service infrastructure, and promoting the establishment of a sound community elderly care service system. The government should also encourage and guide social forces to participate, formulate incentive policies, provide tax incentives and subsidies, in order to attract more social capital to invest in the field of community elderly care services.

#### **5.2. Establishing a Sound Talent Training System**

Improving the community elderly care service talent training system is crucial to cultivate a professional and humane elderly care service team. By establishing professional training institutions and developing corresponding training courses, the professional level of

practitioners can be improved. At the same time, establish a long-term mechanism to attract more outstanding talents to participate in community elderly care services, and improve their work enthusiasm and professional competence through incentive mechanisms.

### **5.3. Promote Technological Innovation and Application**

Fully leverage the role of technology, introduce intelligent, information-based and other technological means, and improve the intelligence level and efficiency of community elderly care services. For example, IoT technology can be used to monitor the living conditions of elderly people, introduce artificial intelligence assisted medical services, and provide remote medical services. This not only improves the level of service, but also better meets the diverse needs of the elderly.

### **5.4. Enhance Service Quality And Diversity**

Strengthen the management and supervision of community elderly care service institutions, and promote the establishment of a sound service quality evaluation mechanism. Establish standardized service processes and norms, standardize service projects, and ensure that elderly people can access high-quality and safe elderly care services. At the same time, encourage community elderly care service institutions to provide diversified services to meet the multi-level needs of the elderly, including rehabilitation services, cultural and sports activities, social interaction, etc.

### **5.5. Establish a Socialized Participation Mechanism**

To strengthen the participation of community residents and volunteers, and build a socialized elderly care service model. By establishing volunteer organizations, we guide community residents to actively participate in elderly care services and provide companionship, assistance, and care for the elderly. This helps to break the loneliness of the elderly, enhance community cohesion, and form a community elderly care service community that is jointly built and shared.

### **5.6. Strengthen Information Transparency and Transparency**

Establish a sound information disclosure mechanism, and ensure that the elderly and their families can obtain sufficient and accurate information on elderly care services. By establishing a unified information platform, the qualifications and service quality evaluations of elderly care service institutions can be publicly disclosed, making it easier for the elderly to make choices. This helps to improve the transparency of the elderly care service market and reduce the risk of information asymmetry in the selection of services by the elderly.

### **5.7. Promote the Coordinated Development of Communities**

Promote the coordinated development of various resources within the community, and form a complete community elderly care service chain. Community medical institutions, cultural and sports activity centers, volunteer organizations, etc. should work together to provide comprehensive services for the elderly. By establishing community elderly care service alliances or cooperation mechanisms, resource sharing can be achieved and service efficiency can be improved.

### **5.8. Establish Sound Regulations and Regulatory Systems**

Strengthen the construction and supervision of community elderly care services, and establish a sound regulatory and policy system. Standardize the operation behavior of community elderly care service institutions, strengthen supervision, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of the elderly. Establish channels for complaints and rights protection to ensure that elderly people have rights and protection in community elderly care services.

In summary, enhancing the capacity of community elderly care services requires collaborative efforts from multiple parties, including the government, social organizations, enterprises, and

others. Through effective paths such as policy support, talent cultivation, technological innovation, service quality improvement, and social participation, the comprehensive improvement of community elderly care services can be achieved, providing more comprehensive, high-quality, and intelligent elderly care services for the elderly. This is a long-term and systematic process that requires joint efforts and sustained attention from all parties.

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