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Quality Standards for Social Welfare Services: Development and Application Methods An International Review

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Abstract

Background

In September 2019, the Quality and Regulation Administration at the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs (hereinafter: the Ministry) announced the launching of the Quality Standards Program for Social Welfare Frameworks. The goal of the program was to develop quality standards for the social welfare services and a systematic methodology for quality measurement. The program is accompanied by a steering committee, including representatives from the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs, the academia, the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), and the civil sector.

As part of the program, the Ministry commissioned the Quality Assurance team at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute to review the quality standards of social welfare services in various countries, the characteristics of the standards, the way they were developed, and the way they were applied.

Goals

The goals of this review were to examine the quality standards of social welfare services in various countries and the way they were developed, and to compare the quality standards and the way they were developed in the reviewed countries. The review examined the following questions:

1. What are quality standards and what types of standards are there?
2. How are the standards developed?
3. How are the standards distributed to and incorporated in social welfare services?
4. What are the uses of the standards?

Method

The review was based on various information sources: academic articles from the Israeli and international professional literature; open access sources (websites, official documents and media releases); gray literature; and information from inspection organizations in seven countries: England, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Australia, and Sweden.

Findings

Inspection organizations in charge of social welfare services in various countries are tasked with developing and specifying the quality standards that service providers are required to meet. The review showed that countries that use quality standards to inspect social welfare services share to a large extent the standards development, distribution, incorporation, and application methods as well as the core values underlying the standards. Best practices for the development, incorporation, and application of quality standards are presented in conclusion.