



HCBS STRATEGIES, INC.

Improving Home and Community Based Systems
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MELANIE E. THOMASSON, M.P.H.

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PROFILE

Melanie Thomasson, MPH, is a Senior Principal at HCBS Strategies. She has been working in long-term services and supports since 2011, supporting LTSS evaluation, policy development, and systems transformation in Alaska, Arkansas, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Hawaii, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Projects have included assessment development and implementation; level of care redesign support; case-mix system development; systems redesign for purposes of rebalancing; and evaluation of many initiatives, including Money Follows the Person, options counseling, and No Wrong Door programs. She is also involved in national and international LTSS research as an interRAI Fellow and member of the interRAI Network for Integrated Care and Aging.

Ms. Thomasson holds a Bachelor of Liberal Arts in Social Science from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She is currently a doctoral candidate in Health Systems and Services Research, with anticipated graduation in 2024. Her dissertation research focuses on “level of care” eligibility policies used across states in Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services.

Prior to joining HCBS Strategies, Ms. Thomasson held a variety of positions in academic, nonprofit association, and state agency settings. Most recently, she served as Vice President of Data and Financial Policy at the Arkansas Hospital Association, where she provided broad-based, data-informed support to healthcare providers and supported evidence-based policy development.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Health Systems and Services Research	In Progress
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, AR	
Master of Public Health, Epidemiology	2008
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, AR	
Bachelor of Liberal Arts, Social Science	2004
University of Missouri at Kansas City, Kansas City, MO	

EXPERIENCE

- Senior Principal**, HCBS Strategies Inc. **2023-Pres.**
Baltimore, MD (Remote)
- Consultant providing evaluation and systems development support to states and agencies serving individuals with disabilities or care complex needs.
- Fellow**, interRAI **2020-Pres.**
Assist jurisdictions in implementing assessment systems and contribute toward national and international scientific development of evidence-based assessment.
- Vice President of Data and Financial Policy**, Arkansas Hospital Association **2021-2023**
Little Rock, AR
- Lead AHA Analytics, the Arkansas Hospital Association's data program. Monitor, analyze and evaluate health policies and health systems trends. Provide access to timely and accurate data, research, and policy analysis to member hospitals. Act as association epidemiologist and support member hospitals' pandemic response efforts.
- Director of Data**, Arkansas Hospital Association **2018-2021**
Little Rock, AR
- Developed and led the association data program, providing data and policy analysis for legislative efforts, and data support, analysis, and decision tools for member hospitals.
- HCBS Consultant**, Freelance **2016-2023**
- Advisor and analyst for state Medicaid Home & Community-Based Services programs, specializing in assessment, level of care, and resource allocation design.
- Research Area Specialist**, University of Michigan **2014-2018**
Ann Arbor, MI (Remote)
- Researcher and consultant specializing in program planning and evaluation, health assessment, and evidence-based systems design for state Medicaid programs serving individuals with complex or long-term care needs. Projects included evaluation of case-mix resource allocation approaches, comparisons of medical eligibility policies, and applied research and assessment implementation assistance.
- Research Associate, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences** **2012-2014**
Little Rock, AR
- Consultant to the Division of Aging and Adult Services at the Arkansas Dept. of Human Services, acting as senior advisor and analyst for strategic health care systems design.
- Instructor**, Univ. of AR for Medical Sciences **2011-2012**
- Project Manager**, Univ. of AR for Medical Sciences **2010-2011**
- Research Assistant**, Univ. of AR for Medical Sciences **2008-2010**

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- “Using better data, better: interRAI implementation strategies from Indiana and the District of Columbia” (with Steven Lutzky, Yemi Geteye, and Steven Counsell), 2023 Home and Community-Based Services Conference, August 2023.
- “The Impact of Level of Care Policy on Access to Home Care in the US” (with Brant E. Fries and Mary L. James), World interRAI Conference, Leuven, Belgium, February 2020.
- “Characterizing the Advance Care Directive Gap among older adults in Australia” (with Tracy Comans, Leila Hanjani, Bertha Lee, Lacey Loomer, Nancye Peel, and Kathleen Norman, presenter), World interRAI Conference, Leuven, Belgium, February 2020.
- “Variation in Potentially Inappropriate Antipsychotic Use in U.S. Nursing Homes,” UAMS College of Public Health Seminar, Little Rock, Arkansas, March 2019.
- “Using Standardized Data to Compare Access to Long Term Services and Supports in Five US States” (with Mary L. James and Brant E. Fries, presenter), 21st IAGG World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics, San Francisco, California, July 2017.
- “Easier said than done? Evaluating and Implementing Case Mix for Home Care” (with Brant E. Fries, Mary L. James, and Nathalie Wellens), World interRAI Conference, Toronto, Canada, April 2016.
- “Facilitating Nursing Home Transitions: Lessons from Arkansas's Options Counseling Program” (with Connie Parker), National Home & Community Based Services Conference, Arlington, VA, Sept. 2013.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- Regional and State Committees: Arkansas (AR) NASHP Public Health Modernization Learning Collaborative (2022-23); AR Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Advisory Council (2018-23); AR Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia Coalition (2022-23); AR Long Term Care Balancing Advisory Committee (2012-14); National Network of Libraries of Medicine S. Central Region Public Health Regional Advisory Council (2013-14); AR Expanding Opportunities Inclusion Project (2011)
- Volunteer Service: Arkansas Children’s Hospital Privacy Board member (2022-23); Houston Hospice Inpatient Unit volunteer (2015-16); Epidemiology Section invited reviewer, American Public Health Association (2012-14); Spit for the Cure Breast Cancer Cohort volunteer recruiter (2008-12)
- Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health Alumna Inductee, Beta Delta Chapter (2012)