

Study on the Feasibility of a Tripartite Body in the Main City of Fuling District in Jointly Creating a 15-minute Senior Care Service Circle

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Abstract: The accelerating demographic transition towards an aging society has elevated elderly care into a critical public policy imperative. In response to this demographic challenge, Fuling District has developed a comprehensive strategic initiative aimed at implementing a spatially optimized 15-minute elderly care service radius network by 2025. This research undertook extensive field reconnaissance and empirical analysis within the district's primary urban zones to facilitate the realization of this policy mandate. Through the theoretical framework of New Public Governance (NPG), with particular emphasis on its tri-sectoral stakeholder model incorporating governmental agencies, market entities, and social organizations, the study identified three priority intervention domains. The research methodology combined geospatial analysis, stakeholder interviews, and service accessibility mapping to generate evidence-based policy recommendations. These findings provide both theoretical foundations and actionable implementation strategies for enhancing Fuling District's elderly care service ecosystem, with specific focus on strengthening cross-sectoral governance mechanisms, optimizing spatial service distribution patterns, and maximizing operational efficiency through resource integration.

Keywords: 15-minute elderly care service network, New Public Governance theory, tripartite stakeholder framework

1. Introduction

From the late 20th century to 2024, China's population aged 60 and above has reached 310 million, representing 22%. The segment aged 65 and older comprises approximately 220 million, or 15.6%. In Fuling District, Chongqing, as of the end of 2023, the resident population is about 1,104,600, with those aged 60 and above accounting for 21.16%, and those aged 65 and above for 18.02%, indicating a transition into a "deep aging" society. To address the challenges posed by this demographic shift, the National Development and Reform Commission, along with 21 other departments, has issued the "14th Five-Year Plan" for public services, which includes the development of comprehensive community service facilities and the promotion of a "15-minute" elderly service radius. The Chongqing Municipal Government aims to complete this service radius by 2027, while Fuling District plans to achieve full coverage by enhancing community-based elderly service facilities, targeting completion of the "15-minute elderly service circle" by 2025.

In the academic world, on the "15-minute elderly service circle" has been a relatively rich exposition, there has been Shanghai, for example, between the elderly service circle in the quality of service should be, and the government, society, the market should be related to the role of the elderly service to start to explore [1], also in Shanghai, for example, there are based on the economic benefits of analyzing the construction site and density and how to effectively develop elderly service circle Construction of site selection and density and how to effectively develop the [2], there are also analyzing how the community resource integration to promote the development of the elderly [3], but on the use of the new public governance theory to introduce multi-party main body to participate in the construction of the elderly service circle of the discussion is less, and most of the current research on the creation of the elderly service circle based on the highly developed areas such as the Shanghai Municipality, based on the Fuling District and other relatively less economically developed cities. Fuling District is still in need of some theoretical assistance from relevant research to ensure the realization of the goal of "15-minute senior care service circle" by 2025.

This paper will summarize the new public governance theory and the concept of the 15-minute elderly service circle, analyze the roles and responsibilities of the three main stakeholders, and reference real-world examples. It will identify relevant issues based on field case investigations and demand-side interviews, ultimately offering recommendations to enhance the construction of the "15-minute elderly service circle" in Fuling District.

2. Theoretical development

2.1. 15-minute circle for elderly services

The "15-minute elderly service circle" evolved from the "15-minute living circle", The theory was first developed in Japan in 1969 with the concepts of "local living area" and "settlement area" in the "Third National Comprehensive Development Plan", [4] Later, with the change of urban planning concepts brought by the New Urbanism movement, the theory was materialized in various countries. The concepts of "local living sphere" and "settlement sphere" appeared in Japan in 1969 [4]. Later, with the change of urban planning concepts brought by the New Urbanism movement, the theory appeared in the practice of urban planning in various countries in a concrete way. In 2010, Carlos Moreno, a Sorbonne University professor, introduced the "15-minute city" concept, which redefined urban living and significantly impacted climate change discourse. By 2014, Shanghai adopted the "15-minute community living circle," releasing national planning guidelines in 2016, promoting it nationwide. As societal concerns about elderly care grew, the living circle concept expanded to encompass elderly service circles. Following the 2021 "14th Five-Year Plan," the central government emphasized developing "15-minute Elderly Service Circles," defined as senior care facilities within a 15-minute walk from elderly residences. This initiative aims to establish community senior care complexes and home service stations, creating a dual-level service supply system that integrates street and community support. Common services include full-care, day-care, door-to-door assistance, meal support, and medical aid.

2.2. Tripartite subjects

The "tripartite subject" is an important part of the new public governance, which breaks through the traditional public governance model of a single government-led, multiple subjects introduced into the public governance network, mainly in the late twentieth century, by the new public management movement and Ostrom's "polycentric governance" theory, gradually introduced by governments into public management. Influenced by the new public management movement and Ostrom's "polycentric governance" theory, it has gradually been introduced into public management by governments.

The "tripartite subject" establishes a collaborative governance framework involving the government, market (enterprises), and social organizations (citizens, non-profits). The government redefines its role as a leader in public governance, coordinating and supervising other entities. Enterprises deliver public services driven by market dynamics, complementing government efficiency, while social organizations offer tailored public services [5].

3. Dividing the responsibilities of the three main parties in fuling district

3.1. Government

The government has transitioned from a dominant role to a coordinating entity, establishing a public governance network with various stakeholders to create a 15-minute pension service circle in Fuling District. This involves forming a collaboration platform, such as a pension service circle committee, leveraging insights from NGOs, refining policies, disseminating them, and utilizing market and social forces to enhance governance efficiency and modularity. For instance, Singapore's "Smart Nation Program" exemplifies this approach, where the government collaborates with enterprises to develop digital infrastructure, supports the "OpeaAI" office in key AI sectors, and establishes an AI application center in partnership with the Singapore University of Technology and Design and NVIDIA. This initiative has accelerated AI model development, providing technical and experiential support for the Smart Nation Program and improving governance efficiency.

3.2. Society (citizens and social organizations)

Timely citizen feedback is crucial for the effective construction of a 15-minute senior care service circle in Fuling District, ensuring oversight to enhance construction efficiency and integrity. For instance, in Hangzhou's Xihu District, the "happiness micro-activities" initiative established community inspection teams to monitor livelihood projects, achieving timely results while reducing government oversight costs and reinforcing democratic governance. Social organizations can facilitate resource integration to mobilize volunteers and enterprise assets, addressing volunteer shortages in elderly services and enhancing service capacity. Additionally, collaboration with supporting industries can yield affordable, high-quality products for the elderly, exemplified by local Taiji Pharmaceutical's bulk procurement of medications at reduced prices for stable distribution to seniors.

3.3. Enterprises

Enterprises must embrace social responsibility by integrating into social governance, considering residents' consumption levels regarding costs, and expanding accessible elderly services to establish a 15-minute elderly service network. Collaborating with various stakeholders, they should address the needs of elderly individuals reluctant to utilize government-run facilities, thereby mitigating the shortcomings of government oversight and enhancing public service satisfaction. Long-term partnerships with communities are essential to provide advanced elderly facilities and trained personnel, while communities can offer venues and stable clientele, enabling local social organizations to leverage their proximity to the public and improve governance satisfaction.

An illustrative example is the "Regional Elderly Service Consortium" model in Shichahai Street, Beijing, which centers around the street elderly care center and community elderly station, uniting 155 service providers (including housekeeping, rehabilitation, and catering) to deliver 26 types of elderly services (such as life care, aging modification, and health monitoring) and 108 specific offerings. This "15-minute Home Care Circle" utilizes elderly facilities as a foundation, attracting

collaboration from relevant professional enterprises to form a consortium that addresses the diverse needs of the elderly and significantly enhances the community's elderly care professionalism.

4. Current issues

4.1. Field trips

Subject: Chongqing Hengsheng Yixinyuan Recreation Service Co., Ltd.

Situated at No. 21, Annex 16, Shunjiang Avenue, Fuling District, Chongqing City, the elderly center benefits from excellent accessibility, with a bus station approximately 200 meters away. The facility is well-equipped, offering a conducive environment for seniors and their families, fulfilling elderly service requirements within a 15-minute radius. Positioned among high-end neighborhoods such as Tian Lai City and Jinko Tianhu Town, the center accurately targets its user demographic. Field investigations reveal comprehensive service offerings, including day care, community health service centers, rehabilitation nursing stations, senior canteens, supermarkets, activity centers, cultural venues, emergency call systems, and barrier-free facilities. The center is a 31-minute walk from local tertiary hospitals, which feature green lanes and sanitary facilities, along with a dedicated health service center staffed with qualified medical personnel and adequate supplies to address basic medical needs. However, the lack of home care services limits options to a single full-care model. Outdoor activities are facilitated by a designated plaza on the second floor, equipped for diverse elderly engagement, with costs ranging from 2,600 upwards based on individual needs. Future planning for additional elderly service circles aims to enhance home care services and improve proximity between nursing institutions and hospitals, thereby creating a more integrated elderly service ecosystem. The center plays a pivotal role in governance within the 15-minute aged-care service radius, collaborating with local communities and voluntary organizations, though it lacks a community canteen, necessitating reliance on self-service options within the facility. The government's role in this service circle remains limited.

4.2. Interviews

In order to better understand the demands of the elderly in Fuling District for the construction of the elderly service circle, we asked a total of 15 elderly people from the age of 60 to 80 and above about their needs through interviews, and according to the problems and demands raised by the elderly were sorted out and analyzed in the hope of bringing reference value, and the following are the main problems found after the interviews

(1) Lack of home care business

The home aging sector faces insufficient enterprise engagement, limited social capital investment, and inadequate regulatory frameworks. Currently, the predominant service model comprises caregiver home visits, which fail to meet the diverse needs of the elderly and do not ensure long-term safety and feasibility for aging in place. Consequently, seniors favoring home aging are often forced to resort to full-time care options.

(2) Lack of meal assistance services

The region has limited community canteen coverage, with only six available, primarily in non-central urban areas. Notably, Dunren Street and Lai Chi Street host two "happy" community canteens, which offer general dining options and a few meals for the elderly. However, these canteens do not adequately support seniors with eating difficulties, forcing them to depend on family, hire caregivers, or seek nursing home services, thereby restricting their meal choices.

(3) Inadequate access to transportation services

Nursing homes with direct bus access are scarce, with only Buddha's Light Nursing Home at the former Economic and Trade School in Artemba Village providing such access without requiring

walking. Fuling District's mountainous terrain presents significant travel challenges for the elderly, who often struggle with mobility. Currently, there is no urban rail transit system, further limiting transportation options for this demographic.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Improving aging in place

Elderly care institutions should enhance training for service personnel to elevate their professional standards. Implementing a fee structure for home care services—such as cooking, cleaning, and medical assistance—can diversify offerings to meet the specific needs of seniors. Leveraging community resources, an emergency call system similar to the "red and green double key" project in Huzhou, Zhejiang Province, can be established. This system allows seniors to access emergency medical services (red key) and daily living assistance (green key) with a simple button press, bridging the digital divide and ensuring timely support. This approach minimizes additional costs associated with accidents and enhances overall safety for the elderly.

Government agencies can adopt the Nantong "aging chain" model to enhance elderly care by integrating institutions, communities, and families into a cohesive service network. This network would facilitate day care, short-term care, and resource coordination through community health service centers, family hospital beds, and chronic disease management. Additionally, the government, society, and market—particularly elderly care institutions—can implement the "red and green button" initiative from Nanxun District, Huzhou City, Zhejiang Province. By installing these buttons in seniors' homes, emergency medical assistance (red button) and living services (green button) can be accessed easily, mitigating the challenges posed by the digital divide. This approach not only reduces the financial burden on the elderly from accidents or inconveniences but also minimizes associated risks.

At present, home care is still facing a shortage of personnel, and Fuling District, the relevant voluntary organizations of the activities in this area is less involved, the community of voluntary organizations can actively participate in home care services, to create a 15-minute circle of elderly services to contribute.

5.2. Improving meals on wheels

Private elderly care institutions can adopt the model of the Shucheng County government cafeteria in Anhui Lu'an City, which serves meals to all citizens, including government employees and local residents. By opening dining facilities to the elderly and offering meal delivery services, these institutions can enhance revenue, improve visibility, and foster a positive reputation. This initiative also alleviates feelings of isolation among seniors, promoting a vibrant community atmosphere. However, it is essential to implement effective registration and monitoring systems to prevent unauthorized access and ensure the safety of residents.

Government departments can increase the construction of community canteens, enhance the coverage of community canteens, and arrange for specialized personnel to help older persons with eating difficulties to eat and meet their needs; or they can join hands with specialized delivery enterprises to deliver community canteen meals directly to the homes of older persons in need.

Social enterprises, particularly hotels, can emulate the model of Yazhong Hotel in Wujiaqu City, Xinjiang, by establishing food aid programs for seniors. This initiative could offer 25 age-appropriate dishes at a nominal fee of 15 yuan for individuals over 60, while adapting cooking methods to suit their dietary needs. This approach not only expands food aid access but also enhances revenue and builds a positive reputation.

5.3. Enhancing travel services

Collaborative efforts among stakeholders can draw inspiration from Shanghai's "Shencheng Mobility" one-button ride-hailing service. By partnering with DDT, Gao De Mobility, and similar entities, a streamlined calling system can be developed. Installing smart screens in sidewalks, communities, and senior care facilities would simplify access for the elderly, effectively bridging the digital divide [6].

6. Conclusion

The establishment of the 15-minute elderly service circle is a significant initiative impacting social welfare, resource allocation, and community well-being. The Fuling District Government, as a key public governance entity, faces challenges in executing this project effectively without collaboration from societal and market stakeholders. The integration of diverse social actors and market efficiencies is essential to mitigate the government's informational lag and enhance planning and implementation effectiveness. This paper highlights the insufficient research on the willingness and demand for the 15-minute elderly service circle in Fuling District. Future studies should focus on comprehensive data collection from both supply and demand perspectives to improve the rigor and feasibility of the research.

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