

Oklahoma State Department of Health Awards Grant for Nursing Home Staff Geriatric Education

Tulsa, Okla. – February 10, 2015 – The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) recently announced the awarding of a State of Oklahoma and Federal (CMS) grant to fund the creation of the first in the U.S. geriatric education program for nursing home staff. Joanne Alderman, MS-N, APRN-CNS, RN-BC, FNGNA, is project director of the \$148,000 grant and manager of Geriatric Collaborative Care Nursing Services (GCCNS-LLC) here.

The purpose of the program is to provide geriatric training to non-clinical staff, certified nurse aides (CNA), certified medication aides (CMA), and nurses (LPN & RN) using the Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) program model. The model facilitates early recognition of geriatric syndromes and chronic diseases in the frail older adult.

NICHE resources will form the basis of the education program. The resources are the Introduction to Gerontology course, Geriatric Resource Nurse curriculum (GRN), Geriatric Patient Care Associate (GPCA) course and the Long Term Care Geriatric Institutional Assessment Profile (LTC-GIAP) benchmarking tool.

NICHE is an international program designed to help hospitals and skilled nursing facilities improve the care of older adults. Based at NYU College of Nursing, the NICHE network consists of over 620 hospitals and healthcare facilities in the U.S., Canada, Bermuda and Singapore.

The LTC-GIAP tool is an organizational assessment used to measure staff knowledge and attitudes in the care of geriatric patients. The survey provides benchmarking data for use in targeting areas of improvement. The assessment is conducted prior to program implementation and then later to see if and where gaps in knowledge have been addressed.

Saint Francis Hospital, Tulsa, Okla., a NICHE designated hospital, is sponsoring the two Tulsa nursing homes involved in the project: Oklahoma Methodist Manor and Tulsa Jewish Retirement and Health Care.

According to the Eldercare Workforce Alliance, “the breadth and depth of geriatric education and training for healthcare professions remain inadequate and despite some improvements, geriatrics principles are still too often insufficiently represented in healthcare training curricula and clinical experiences focused on gerontology are not robust.”

By integrating the NICHE program and the clinical component that provides mentoring/preceptorship, long term care nursing staff will have a thorough, evidence-based knowledge base in geriatric nursing and the tools to provide optimal, best practice care for their residents.

NICHE trained staff are key to preventing potentially unnecessary hospitalizations or readmissions among nursing facility residents. For more information on NICHE, visit www.nicheprogram.org/.

Expected program outcomes include:

- 90% of nursing staff will complete the NICHE-based training with an 80% post-test score.
- Nursing homes will have a NICHE steering committee, a NICHE coordinator and a core group of Geriatric Resource Nurses (GRNs) and CNA champions.
- Program participants will articulate knowledge/skills to other long term care staff and demonstrate how the information improves resident outcomes.

About NICHE

NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) is an international program designed to help improve the care of older adults. The vision of NICHE is for all patients 65-and-over to be given sensitive and exemplary care. The mission of NICHE is to provide principles and tools to stimulate a change in the culture of healthcare facilities to achieve patient-centered care for older adults. NICHE, based at the NYU College of Nursing, has over 620 hospitals and healthcare facilities from the U.S., Canada, Bermuda and Singapore in the network.

For more information visit www.nicheprogram.org/.

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