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Melodee Harris, Ann Kolanowski, and Sherry Greenberg

Nurse leaders are first and foremost, registered nurses. Nursing leadership is critical for improving the care and quality of life for older adults. Visionary nurse leaders collaborate, motivate, influence, and inspire the achievement of values and goals to improve the quality of life for older adults in long-term care. Professional registered nurses are transformational servant nurse leaders who hold the key to nursing home reform.

Multidimensional Aspects of Nurse Staffing in Nursing Homes  179
Christine Mueller

Nurse staffing involves determining, allocating, and delivering nursing resources and care to residents in order to achieve the desired and required quality of care and life for residents. A comprehensive evidence-based framework for nurse staffing in nursing homes is presented to be considered beyond the number of nurse staff and consequently the nurse staffing strategies needed to address care quality in nursing homes.

Age-Friendly Nursing Homes: Opportunity for Nurses to Lead  191
Alice Bonner, Terry Fulmer, Leslie Pelton, and Marina Renton

Age-Friendly Health Systems is a movement to ensure that all care and support for and with older adults across all settings is age-friendly care. Age-Friendly Health Systems provide staff, leadership, and care partner education based on the 4M Framework (What Matters, Medications, Mentation, Mobility). Nursing homes and other settings are often left out of local, state, or federal strategic plans on aging. In addition, limited quality and quantity of nursing home staff impact new program implementation. We consider how programs and services to support older adults can create and sustain an Age-Friendly Ecosystem, including a meaningful role for nursing homes.

Essential Reform in Long-Term Care  207
Tara A. Cortes

This article focuses on factors contributing to the state of long-term care in this country. It highlights federal legislation which delegated much oversight to the states resulting in the lack of uniform standards for leadership...
qualifications, staffing levels, and payment. It describes how existing pay-
ment models and hierarchical leadership styles contribute to the system’s
inability to recruit and retain qualified staff and the need for education to
prepare nurses and direct caregivers to work with the complex population
in today’s nursing homes.

Dementia-Specific Nursing Care Competencies for Nursing Education and Long-Term Care Practice
Ann M. Mayo

Enhanced dementia-specific nursing care is needed to incorporate the rapid changes in dementia science for an expanding population of persons living with dementia (PLWD) in long-term care. Dementia-specific nursing care competencies should be incorporated into current curricula for undergraduate and graduate nursing programs as well as nurse professional practice. This article proposes a set of dementia nursing care competencies that reflect current scientific findings on neurodegenerative dementia diseases, communication and shared decision-making, supportive care management for symptoms of distress and deficits in activities of daily living, risk assessments for adverse outcomes, palliative care and advance directives, and caregiver issues.

Geropsychiatric Nursing Leadership in Long-Term Care
Pamela Z. Cacchione, Wanda Spurlock, Kathy Richards, and Melodee Harris

Geropsychiatric nursing (GPN) leaders in long-term care settings have a 25-year tradition of innovation that has strikingly improved mental health and quality of life for older adult residents. The impact of the Coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) on the mental health of older adult residents and today’s evolving health care systems requires additional GPN leaders well-prepared to advocate, plan, and deliver care for this vulnerable population. In this article, the authors discuss GPN leadership in the context of its history, the role of professional organizations, and educational competencies. A leadership exemplar is provided as well as recommendations for clinical practice and research.

The Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Leadership Role in Nursing Homes: Leading Efforts Toward High Quality and Safe Care
Deb Bakerjian

This article highlights the critical role of advanced practice registered nurses in the care of older adults living in nursing homes. This population is one of the frailest, marginalized, and often neglected in the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic impact on nursing homes resulted in a stunning number of infections and subsequent resident deaths. This is a shameful reminder of the many challenges and gaps in the nursing home industry including inadequate staffing, high staff turnover, improper isolation technique, and lack of fundamental knowledge of how to adequately implement infection prevention and control processes. Strong advanced practice registered nurse leadership may have mitigated some of these factors.
Alzheimer disease and related dementias (ADRD) are irreversible, progressive brain disorders. Many people with ADRD experience the final stage of the disease, advanced dementia, in nursing homes (NHs). Although palliative care, including symptom management and emotional support for caregivers, is advocated for those with advanced dementia, many NH residents experience potentially burdensome interventions, such as feeding tubes, hospital transfers, and intensive rehabilitation. Nurses play a critical role in ensuring high-quality palliative care to residents with advanced dementia. The aim of this article is to raise awareness of the palliative care needs of NH residents with advanced dementia.

Nursing leaders have a responsibility to promote and facilitate social engagement and connectedness to mitigate social isolation in long-term care (LTC). The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized longstanding problems in LTC facilities, such as staff mix, workload, and support. The pandemic has shed light on the severe deleterious effect of social isolation and the critical importance of maintaining social engagement and connectedness, especially in times of crisis or major change. Staff education and ongoing support cannot be overemphasized. Critical nursing leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration engaging all team members are essential in operationalizing nonpharmacological approaches that foster the well-being of residents with dementia.

Protecting frail older residents from adverse health outcomes associated with preventable illnesses and conditions, such as geriatric syndromes within the long-term care (LTC) health system requires attention by the health care team, led by professional nurse leaders, to all of the operant contextual factors influencing health outcomes. Mitchell’s Health Outcomes Model helps to frame these operant contextual factors to help understand how the person and the situation are viewed, which then directs professional nurse leaders’ interventions. Utilization of the LTC facilities Quality Metrics data can shape and inform nurses leaders as to the gaps which can be filled to meet resident care needs operant among these modificable contextual factors.
Nursing Leadership – Transforming the Work Environment in Nursing Homes

Mary Ellen Dellefield and Caroline Madrigal

The work environment is a modifiable construct associated with the quality of nursing home care. This article describes and explains variables known to be associated with the work environment of nurses in nursing homes, including the history and characteristics of nursing homes; the nature of nursing work; the nursing skill mix, and care delivery. Nursing leadership has the potential to transform the nursing home work environment and improve quality of care through education, research, advocacy, and implementation of evidence-based practices.