A Community Approach to Improved Dementia Care

Case for Action:
- Dementia care is one of the most pressing issues in long-term care today
- The Alzheimer’s Association recently reported that there are more than 5 million people in the U.S. with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia; 26.6 million people worldwide
- By mid-century those numbers are projected to more than triple
- Direct and indirect costs of dementia care currently amounts to more than $148 billion annually

Description:
- In 2002, the University of Rochester School of Nursing developed the Rochester Community Initiative, an innovative model program of support, empowerment, education, and recognition for caregivers. A key to the initiative’s success is the network of academic nursing experts paired with care providers, facility administrators, and community stakeholders:
  - Geriatric experts from the community and School of Nursing surveyed 120 long-term care facilities in Upstate New York to identify priority concerns
  - A core advisory group, using these priorities, developed interdisciplinary, community needs-based workshops with resource guides, an email alert network to disseminate best practice information and news in the field, a website for sharing resources and facility innovations, and annual conferences with national experts

Partners/Funding:
- School of Nursing
- John A. Hartford Foundation
- Nursing homes (NHs) in western New York
- Geriatric nurses in this community

Outcomes:
- An estimated 800 providers from over 100 facilities caring for an estimated 10,000 residents with dementia have participated in the Initiative to date
- An Initiative website providing NHs with with resources is available at - http://www.dementianursing.org
- Evidence-based practice has been infused into nursing home and dementia care settings to improve care practice
- Changes have occurred in NH practices such as (1) the consolidation of medication passes, increasing nursing availability to spend time with patients by 28% (see American Journal of Nursing article online http://www.nursingcenter.com/library/JournalArticle.asp?Article_ID=615323) and (2) plans to replicate the “High School Students Take Classes in a Nursing Home” Project (providing education in NHs for high school students at risk of not graduating) that have increased graduation rates as much as 69% in one local program (see American Journal of Nursing article online http://www.nursingcenter.com/library/JournalArticle.asp?Article_ID=679840).
For more information contact:
Nancy M. Watson, PhD, RN, Associate Professor
University of Rochester School of Nursing
255 Crittenden Blvd., Box SON
Rochester, NY 14642
585-273-2518