



## Preferred Health Care Services showcasing programs at nursing conference

Dementia care and falls prevention to be discussed

Wednesday October 13, 2010 -- Lisa Bailey

Two programs developed by Preferred Health Care Services are among innovative care approaches that will be discussed at the 36th Annual Gerontological Nursing Association of Ontario Conference.

Hosted by the association's Hamilton chapter Nov. 4-5, the event includes clinicians, educators and researchers sharing practices that enhance gerontological nursing care, education, research and social policy development.

These concurrent, roundtable sessions will allow for discussion and exchange among small groups of delegates.

Preferred Health Care Services staff educator Sharron Hart and staff development specialist Michelle Donald will talk about the Hush – No Rush program they created.

Developed in 2007, the dementia-care program has been adopted at the majority of Leisureworld's 26 long-term care homes. Preferred Health Care Services has also trained its personal support workers (PSWs) working in the community, and Hart has also worked with a community agency.

Hush – No Rush emphasizes creating a quiet, calm environment and flexibility in seniors' and residents' schedules. Teamwork and communication are also main aspects of the program.

Hart says real change has occurred in homes that have embraced the program, with much quieter units and fewer responsive behaviours.

"We have happier residents, happier staff," she says.

Staff educators Jeena Oommen and Laura Booth will highlight the Step by Step Falls Reduction Program, piloted in the community with PSWs earlier this year.

Oommen says training focuses on the incidence, cost and causes of falls, especially among the elderly, as well as prevention strategies.

A pharmacist also discusses medication interaction and misuse, which can contribute to falls.



A checklist, based on Registered Nurses Association of Ontario best-practice guidelines for falls prevention and injuries in older adults, is used by PSWs to help them identify hazards in clients' homes.

Recommendations are left with the client and their family to consider, with follow-ups made about a month later.

Oommen says the program has empowered front-line staff with more knowledge that they can share with clients and their families.

Poster submissions for both Step By Step and Hush – No Rush have earned recognition at conferences of the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres.

Sharing information on these programs at conferences provides an opportunity to expand them and contribute to best practices.

"It's exciting because we're able to let others know what we've learned and also that what we've learned works," Hart says.

An aging population is also leading to greater awareness and education on areas such as dementia care and falls prevention.

"With the baby boomer generation, we need a really good, committed, strong group of health-care workers who are willing to learn good dementia care, because it's going to be very necessary," Hart says.

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