



CARE

DAILY

Official Newsletter of Dementia Care Professionals of America

A branch of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America

Spring 2008

Call for Nominations for Dementia Care Professional of the Year

It's your turn to be recognized: Dementia Care Professionals of America is seeking nominees for its annual "Dementia Care Professional of the Year" award.

DCPA introduced the prestigious award last year and will present it annually to an individual who demonstrates professional excellence in care, compassionate performance above and beyond expectations, and a dedicated commitment to individuals with dementia.

The deadline for applications for the 2008 award is September 1, 2008. Peers, colleagues, employers, clients or clients' families can make the nomination, and candidates do not need to be affiliated with DCPA or AFA.

Cynthia Heafy of Coral Springs, FL was named the first "Dementia Care Professional of the Year," and received the award at AFA's 2nd National Concepts in Care Conference in Philadelphia last October.

Heafy is a certified elder crime practitioner and certified geriatric care manager who has worked with seniors with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia for more than a decade. She has been employed with the Coral Springs Police Department for the past 27 years.

As the department's community involvement coordinator, she investigates senior abuse cases, is a first responder in cases involving individuals with dementia, makes arrangements for those who can no longer live alone, and ensures that long-term care facilities are in compliance.

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Eric J. Hall and Cynthia Heafy

AFA Quilt to Remember Recognizes Staff, Clients, Families

The St. Barnabas Senior Center, Los Angeles, snapped and sewed and put its creativity to work over several months to honor the staff of its adult day center in a unique and touching way. It crafted an eight feet square quilt adorned with a collage of photos that capture its staff with clients, and a large replica of its logo--two blades of grass, with one leaning on the other to represent the interaction of staff and clients.

The center then presented the heartfelt quilt to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America for its AFA Quilt to Remember, the nation's first grand-scale quilt that pays tribute to individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, their families—and healthcare professionals.

The contribution marks one of the ways that dementia care professionals are riding the wave of this powerful initiative.

While the majority of panels honor or memorialize individuals with Alzheimer's disease, a few, such as the one from contributed by St. Barnabas, recognize the dedication of professional caregivers.

"Healthcare professionals play such a vital role in dementia care that it is only fitting that they should be a part of this powerful initiative," said Eric J. Hall, AFA's president and chief executive officer. "With a project of this stature, we're letting the nation know about the wide-ranging impact of Alzheimer's disease and the enormous extent of the circle of care."

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FAST FACT:

Dementia Care Professionals of America now has more than **2,500** members, spanning 46 states and United States territories.

How to Get Involved

- Make a quilt panel as a recreational activity with your clients.
- Encourage your employer to craft a panel in tribute to its clients and/or staff.
- Spread the word about the project to family caregivers, colleagues, etc.
- Visit a tour stop of the AFA Quilt to Remember.

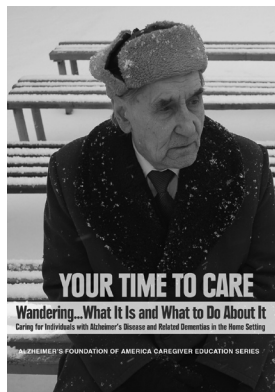
For more information, quilt applications and the 2008 tour dates, visit www.alzquilt.org.

Take Advantage of Membership Benefits

DCPA invites you to take advantage of an exciting membership benefit: an on-line discount shopping program that offers reductions of 10 percent to 60 percent on thousands of name brand goods and services. To use this service, visit the DCPA Web site, www.careprofessionals.org, select "Join DCPA" and then "Membership Discount Program" from the navigation bars on the left side of the screen. Then use the DCPA membership login and password that we have provided to you! If you have not received notice of these codes, please contact us at info@careprofessionals.org.

Help to Prevent Wandering

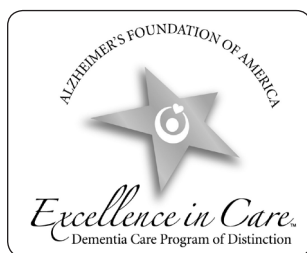
What is wandering and what can you do about it? Many healthcare professionals face this behavioral challenge with their clients, either in the home environment or in a facility. Now, you can learn more about this important subject in a new DVD, "Wandering...What It Is and What to Do About It," released as part of AFA's "Your Time to Care" series for family and professional caregivers. The 43-minute DVD includes interviews with top experts and family caregivers, and provides an understanding of wandering behaviors and practical tips to help ensure the safety of individuals with dementia. It is available from AFA's E-Store, at www.alzfdn.org.



Excellence in Care Specialists Evaluate Dementia Settings

AFA's program of national standards for dementia care settings, Excellence in Care, has taken off. So far, AFA has designated six dementia care settings as Excellence in Care Dementia Programs of Distinction after they successfully met its national standards; dozens of other dementia care facilities are in the evaluation process; and AFA has trained 62 healthcare professionals as Excellence in Care specialists. AFA will be evaluating facilities on a continuing basis, offering them the opportunity to ensure that their dementia care settings meet the optimal care needs of their clients. Qualified dementia care professionals who meet AFA's criteria

and undergo training can conduct the program in their communities. Organizations can select key staff and/or consultants to apply to become Excellence in Care Specialists, and individual professionals may apply independently for this paid consulting position. To learn more about Excellence in Care, visit www.excellenceincare.org.



Dedicated professionals are often compelled to seek out information that can enhance their skills or overall expertise. One of the best and easiest ways to arrange for an ongoing supply of cutting-edge developments and practical information is to sign up for a variety of e-Newsletters. Best of all, many are free and can be customized to supply only the news that fits your needs. Here are some e-Newsletters to get you started:

Alzheimer Research Forum

This on-line resource tracks published scientific papers on Alzheimer's disease. www.alzforum.org

Alzheimer's Disease Education and Resource Center (ADEAR), National Institute on Aging

This government agency has a newsletter, "Connections," for professionals, researchers, and families interested in Alzheimer's disease research.

www.nia.nih.gov/Alzheimers/ResearchInformation/Newsletter

Alzheimer's Daily News

Published by Ageless Design, an AFA member organization, this daily includes the latest news clippings and a calendar of events. www.alznews.org

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

AFA publishes a bi-weekly e-Newsletter, with updates about AFA and Alzheimer's disease in general, including news headlines.

www.alzfdn.org

American Health Assistance Foundation's Alzheimer's Disease Research Newsletter

The foundation's e-mail alerts and newsletter cover medical and science information and news. www.ahaf.org

Or, gather news yourself by using the "news alerts" feature of Google, a popular search engine. Fill out the information boxes with topics of interest, such as "dementia," "Alzheimer's disease," "caregiver" and "aging." www.google.com/alerts

Call for Nominations

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By coincidence, Heafy said, while she was already entrenched in her career, her mother developed dementia and passed away in 2004.

In Broward County, FL, the police department "has a mantra: if it involves a senior, call Cindy," according to police officer Kerry Draddy, a colleague who nominated Heafy.

Eric J. Hall, AFA's president and chief executive officer, said the award reflects DCPA's mission to raise the bar on dementia care.

"With this award, we are identifying exceptional individuals involved in dementia care and celebrating their accomplishments," he said. "Professionals like Cynthia Heafy are making a difference in their communities by going that extra mile."

For more information and an application for Dementia Care Professional of the Year, visit www.careprofessionals.org.

Continuum of Care Offers Options during Disease Progression

By Daniel B. Kaplan

Dementia is devastating—not only because of the types of changes it produces, but because of the increasing severity of these changes over time. The vast majority of disorders and diseases that cause dementia are progressive—a gradual loss of intellectual capacity, such as with memory and organization; an evolution of challenges to functional capacity, such as the ability to tend to one's own needs; and behavioral changes. These transformations explain the exponential need for support and care.

Fortunately, there is an impressive spectrum of services designed to assist people living with chronic illness. Individuals with dementia can tap into this network of support and find the most appropriate combination of services at each point along their personal journey. At the same time, healthcare professionals must have a firm grasp of each segment of this

continuum of care in order to best serve clients and families.

Medical Care

In the beginning, someone experiencing memory concerns and their family members are likely to raise many questions about memory loss, misguided trips to the store, confused agitation and other symptoms. Proper assessment and diagnosis are critical to obtaining appropriate treatment and care—and the earlier, the better.

Primary care physicians can be a great place to start. Typically, this evaluation will include a physical examination, a review of medications, a detailed description of concerns, blood testing and basic screenings for mental status, depression and stress.

For older adults, a geriatrician is also a good resource for this assessment, as well as for ongoing primary care. Neurologists are often consulted, since utilization of brain scan technology will provide essential information about brain health and performance.

A Quilt to Remember

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In submitting the quilt panel, Martha Spinks, executive director of St. Barnabas, which operates the S. Mark Taper Foundation Adult Day Health Care Center, commented, “Our adult day health care center staff is the most passionate and compassionate team of professional caregivers I have ever known.”

Noting that staff members have been employed at the center anywhere from two to 20 years, she noted, “Through all that time, they have every day been kind, loving, reassuring and respectful toward the people for whom they perform the most personal of care.”

And still others have flipped the coin: healthcare professionals themselves are designing quilt panels along with clients and family caregivers to honor those with the disease.

Among them, Arden Courts, Wayne, NJ, contributed a quilt decorated like a family tree in honor of its clients, staff and residents.

Amy DePreker, executive director of the assisted living residence, said the making of the quilt greatly benefited its residents. “Even though they are suffering from memory loss, it is amazing to see that they have not lost the skill and knowledge to stitch and put the quilt together,” she said.

So far, the AFA Quilt to Remember consists of about 100 emotional and thought-provoking quilts contributed by individuals and organizations across the country. Another 300 applications to make panels have been submitted and panels will be accepted on an ongoing basis so that the collection can continue to grow over time.



Martha Spinks proudly displays her agency's panel

Raise Awareness during November

November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, and AFA invites all professionals and organizations to help bring attention to Alzheimer's disease in local communities by participating in its annual initiatives. Here's how:

- Honor those who have passed and those currently living with Alzheimer's disease by hosting a National Commemorative Candle Lighting ceremony on November 13, 2008. Conducive venues include the facility where you work, your house of worship or a local community center. To sign up, visit www.candlelighting.org.
- Help promote assessment of memory concerns and education about Alzheimer's disease and successful aging by participating in National Memory Screening Day on November 18, 2008. Talk with your employer about offering free screenings or volunteer at a local site that plans to participate. To learn more, visit www.nationalmemoryscreening.org.

AFA Endorses Nursing Home Improvement Act

AFA has endorsed the Nursing Home Transparency and Improvement Act of 2008 (S. 2641), which would require nursing homes to provide more information about ownership and accountability, as well as require staff training on dementia and elder abuse.

In letters to the sponsors of the bill, Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Senator Herbert Kohl (D-WI), AFA emphasized the need for improved initial and ongoing training and highlighted AFA's two national programs designed to raise the bar on dementia care in the United States—DCPA and Excellence in Care.

Nursing home quality of care and accountability is a critical issue since, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, an estimated 70 percent of all nursing home residents have some cognitive impairment.

Continuum of Care Offers Options during Disease Progression

In some cases, a doctor will request a comprehensive battery of neuro-psychiatric tests, which provide specific details about subtle aspects of mental impairment. In addition, a geriatric psychiatrist can help to assess and manage the various psychiatric symptoms that can be caused by dementia.

The combination of results from these many specialized tests will allow the cooperative medical team to rule out nearly all possibilities, choose the most probable cause, and deliver what is called a “differential diagnosis.”

Community Care

In the earliest stages of illness, disease education and psychosocial support to clients and families are a primary focus. Those in need can obtain information and counseling from local agencies, early-stage support groups for individuals with the disease and for caregivers, and national hotlines such as that offered by the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America (866-232-8484).

Another essential step at this early stage is to plan for the future. An elder law attorney can help arrange for legal protections to guarantee that the rights of the person with the illness are honored and that the correct parties are authorized to act on his or her behalf. A financial planner can offer consultation on managing savings and other assets, and insurance needs. Local Area Agencies on Aging typically offer benefits counseling services as well, helping to direct families to the most appropriate public insurance systems. In addition, a professional geriatric care manager can help coordinate all of these issues, as well as manage future care services.

Multiple levels of home-based care are available to meet the needs of community-dwelling clients and help them remain at home for as long as possible.

At the minimum end, companion services can provide socialization, supervision in the home and on errands, light housekeeping and reminders about taking medication, keeping appointments, etc. Non-medical homecare offers personal care and more in-depth housekeeping assistance in addition to traditional companion services. Offering even further assistance, home health care adds nurse-supervised aides who can manage more hands-on tasks such as limited wound care and medication management. Then, visiting nurse services offer full nursing services within the home and a social work counterpart to assist with care planning.

Outside the home, adult day programs are another vital part of community care. They offer a supervised and structured routine that typically includes recreational therapies, intellectual stimulation activities and physical exercise. These social or medical model service centers offer comprehensive daytime care, giving respite to family caregivers who work or need to tend to other responsibilities.

Residential Care

A move from the home to a long-term care facility is an extremely common transition in the journey through dementia. For some, the decision is based primarily on a lack of an informal support network, such as family caregivers. For others, there are financial considerations, insurmountable risks in the home, or complex health factors.

Topping the list as the fastest growing residential alternative for older Americans is assisted living. These facilities offer personal care and supportive supervision, and typically attract residents with sufficient income, savings or long term care insurance. Most of these centers are not equipped to manage major illness or disability, but can provide attentive care to people who would struggle to live independently. Many also include specialized dementia care units, with safety features and programming appropriate for clients with limited cognition.

For those in need of more assistance, the continuum of care continues with skilled nursing facilities. The typical nursing home is well-versed in the needs of individuals with dementia, and many offer specialized care units for this population as well. This often becomes an alternative when creating a comprehensive level of clinical care and medical service in the home setting is unmanageable or prohibitively expensive.

Hospice Care

When individuals approach the end of their lives, very special care teams can be called upon to ease this transition. Hospice care is a model of service intended to offer comfort, tender attention, and skillful care during the last several months of life—easing the dying process for sick individuals, families and other caregivers. Hospice services can be provided in homes, residential facilities or special hospice centers.

While the continuum of care is likely to change further to meet the needs of Americans, it affords individuals and families an array of choices appropriate for their personal situations, as well as a multitude of challenging and fulfilling work environments for dementia care professionals.

Daniel B. Kaplan, LICSW, LMSW, CSW-G, QDCS, is a former director of social services at the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America, and is currently a doctoral student at the Columbia University School of Social Work in New York.

Renewing DCPA Qualification

In order to retain your status as an AFA Qualified Dementia Care Provider or AFA Qualified Dementia Care Specialist, you must renew your qualification every two years. Renewal requires a total of four continuing education credits (CEUs) every two years. Successful completion of each Care Daily quiz offers one CEU, unless otherwise stated. A 30-minute period of relevant coursework, training, in-service education or seminar is worth 0.5 CEUs. DCPA recommends that you record dates, times and descriptions of CEU programs and quizzes to help complete the renewal process. Renewal forms will be mailed six months prior to renewal dates.

Continuum of Care

Test Questions

1. A continuum of care services for individuals with dementia is essential because:

- a. Dementia causes several types of losses in cognitive and functional ability
- b. Symptoms of dementia usually progress over time
- c. Different care services are designed to meet unique needs
- d. All of the above

2. Why is it critical to seek proper assessment at the earliest signs of dementia?

- a. All causes of dementia are reversible if caught early enough
- b. Early diagnosis allows for the most effective treatment and care
- c. Nursing homes won't provide care to a person without an official diagnosis
- d. The assessment process is more affordable when symptoms are mild

3. A thorough battery of cognitive assessments designed to detect subtle aspects of impairment is called:

- a. Personality profiling
- b. Depression screening
- c. Brain scan imaging
- d. Neuro-psychiatric testing

4. Which of the following medical specialists is appropriate for the care of older people with dementia?

- a. Geriatricians who specialize in the general medical care of seniors
- b. Geriatric psychiatrists who can manage psychiatric symptoms of dementia
- c. Neurologists who can use brain scan technologies to assess brain health
- d. All of the above

5. Community organizations, support groups and national hotlines are essential sources of:

- a. Information, referral and disease education
- b. Psychosocial support and counseling
- c. Support for individuals with the disease and caregivers
- d. All of the above

6. The list of professionals who are recommended to help families plan for legal and financial protections does NOT include which of the following?

- a. Geriatric care managers
- b. Neurologists
- c. Elder law attorneys
- d. Financial advisors

7. The range of home-based care services does NOT include which of the following?

- a. Assisted living facilities
- b. Personal care and home health services to manage daily care needs
- c. Adult day programs that offer supervised activities
- d. Companion services to manage socialization needs

8. The transition into a long-term care facility might be appropriate when:

- a. There are too few informal supports available to meet the many needs of a person with moderate or advanced dementia
- b. The person with the illness can no longer live independently
- c. There are money problems, dangers in the home, or medical factors that make community dwelling unrealistic
- d. All of the above

9. Which of the following care settings might offer specialized dementia care for clients with Alzheimer's disease?

- a. Assisted living facilities
- b. Skilled nursing homes
- c. Adult day health centers
- d. All of the above

10. Hospice care can be made available at the end of life to:

- a. Help patients to be more comfortable
- b. Support families through difficult emotions and decisions
- c. Provide comprehensive care services
- d. All of the above

Quiz Answer Form: Spring 2008

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Circle the best answer for each question.
For DCPA qualification renewal,
mail the completed page to:

Alzheimer's Foundation of America
Attn: DCPA
322 Eighth Avenue, 7th floor
New York, NY 10001

Get Involved!

Together we can make a difference

Dementia Care Professionals of America is a division of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, and offers membership, training, qualification and other benefits to healthcare professionals involved in dementia care.

Wear your DCPA Pin with Pride



DCPA is your professional association and your thoughts and involvement are important to us.

By giving us the benefit of your experience and professionalism, DCPA will grow even stronger in its ability to serve your needs and represent your interests.

- Share experiences and ideas related to dementia care.
- Propose topics for new training and continuing education material.
- Inform us about local issues where DCPA's advocacy efforts might be helpful.
- Attend AFA educational/networking conferences in your state.
- Encourage others to join DCPA.

To contact us:

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