

Lowman Home Featured at National Conference

(April 3, 2006) Lowman Home Nursing Center recently had an opportunity to discuss its successes with culture change and quality improvement initiatives on April 3, 2006, at the Institute for the Future of Aging Services (IFAS) annual conference in Washington, DC. IFAS is the research arm for AAHSA.

Dee Longno, RN, Wellspring Coordinator and Beverly Miller, CNA, of the Lowman Home, proudly presented their success stories of documented quality improvement activities to a national audience. They specifically discussed their journey of change in the care of residents' skin and shared with the audience their challenges and victories. The culture change occurring at Lowman Home has "empowered" the CNAs there to make "good decisions" to deliver appropriate care to residents, said Beverly Miller.

"Direct care team members are responsible for the quality of care outcomes of every resident, and the CNAs are the backbone of every community," said Warren Page, Vice President of Operations for Lutheran Homes of South Carolina, which operates Lowman Home. "The resident care decision-making authority and the policies that affect resident care must include the direct care team members' input."

Lowman Home is currently participating in the 8th Statement of Work with The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence and is one of the many "trendsetters" across the state of South Carolina which collaborates regularly to improve the quality of care rendered to residents. The Lutheran Wellspring Alliance of the Carolinas consists of four skilled nursing facilities, including Lowman Home, operated by Lutheran Homes of South Carolina and five skilled nursing facilities operated by Lutheran Services for the Aging in North Carolina. The Wellspring Model combines resident-directed care concepts, staff empowerment and clinical training modules. Facilities that belong to Wellspring alliances provide their frontline workers—particularly CNAs with training in nationally recognized best practices on subjects such as nutrition, feeding, palliative care, leadership and pain management. Training is based on problem-solving techniques and supplemented with a blueprint for action that helps administrators and managers translate ideas into everyday practices.

At the same time, participating homes give their frontline workers a voice in how their work should be performed. The model assumes those care decisions need to take place close to the residents and that an empowered workforce increases resident and employee satisfaction and reduces staff turnover. All Wellspring facilities collect and share clinical data from residents concerning the prevalence of incontinent episodes, number of falls, weight loss, and other problems. They follow a set of guidelines to help them use the data to monitor performance and improve care.

If you would like more information regarding Wellspring, you may log onto Wellspring's website at www.wellspringis.org.