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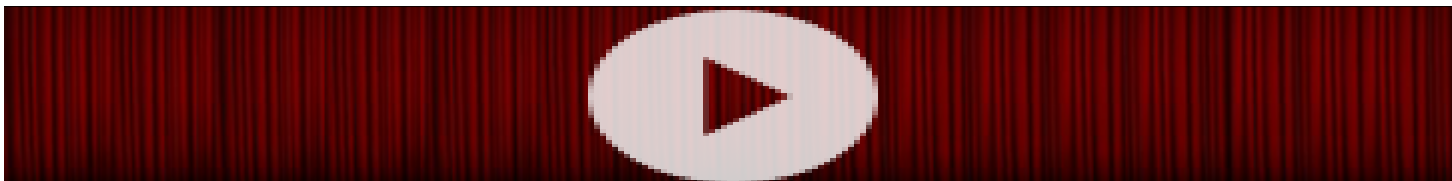
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SEMINAR DELVES INTO DEMENTIA TRAINING

January 17, 2017 at 6:00 am | By KATHERYN HOUGHTON Daily Inter Lake

Every 66 seconds, someone in the United States is diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or some form of dementia, according to the Alzheimer’s Association. About 27,000 Montanans are projected to carry that diagnosis by 2025. In response, local health-care workers are increasing efforts to educate Montana communities on how to react to the disease.

On Saturday health-care professionals and family caregivers will have the opportunity to receive training on how to support someone with dementia. The day-long seminar at The Springs assisted-living center in Whitefish is a stepping stone to be a Certified Dementia Practitioner, but is open to anyone.



Jennifer Crowley, owner of Eagleview West Life Care Planning, in her office in Kila on Friday. (Aaric Bryan/Daily Inter Lake)

Jennifer Crowley, owner of Eagleview West Life Care Planning, said she’s hosting the event as an effort to confront what she calls a “looming crisis.”

“The need for this type of training isn’t going away,” she said. “The more we can educate people, the more prepared we are as a community overall.”

In Montana, more than 19,000 people 65 and older currently have Alzheimer's.

Parallel to the growing number of Montanans impacted by the disease, the state is facing a health-care workforce shortage. Crowley said that means resources to care for people with dementia are spread thin.

"We're behind the curve as far as helping families and professionals understand the condition and how to care for this unique population in a way that's dignified," she said. "Training like this is so important for our communities, whether you're a nurse, caregiver or first responder."

LAST YEAR Crowley was one of 13 people in Montana to gain certification as an Alzheimer's disease and dementia trainer through the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners.

Terry Egan, the associate director of the Montana Geriatric Education Center at the University of Montana, said it was the first time the certification was available in Montana.

She said the training she received was an important step toward implementing the state's plan that outlines ways to care for people diagnosed with dementia as well as their families. The plan was released last month and endorsed by Gov. Steve Bullock.

"We heard the need for more dementia training for health-care workers in Montana and decided not to wait for the state plan to get rolling," Egan said. "We now have 13 trainers around the state of Montana that are certified to teach this course, from Kalispell to Glendive."

The center secured the training through a \$10,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration.

Egan said if there's still a gap in dementia-care training come this fall, the center may offer the certification for a second time.

CROWLEY said Saturday's seminar will address simple definitions, such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia. It will cover how to be part of someone's transition as they lose their memory and outline how to walk someone through daily routines as their memory worsens, such as brushing their teeth or pulling the covers down before slipping into bed.

"There have been trainings before, but this course really is the first time we've had the ability to teach a standardized way to care for this population," she said. "Hopefully it continues to grow across Montana."

The seminar will be from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and costs \$150. The price includes the class, a course notebook and lunch. For more information or to register, call Crowley at 406-752-5821 or email her at Jennifer@eagleviewwest.com.

To learn more about the Montana Alzheimer's and Dementia State Plan, go to <http://mtalzplan.com>.

Reporter Katheryn Houghton may be reached at 758-4436 or by email at khoughton@dailyinterlake.com.

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