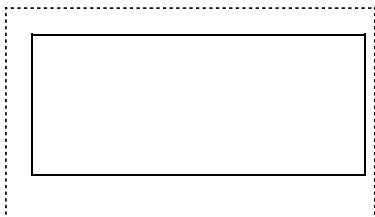




Medicare staff prepares for new memory care unit

Written by Staff Reports
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Several staff members of the Iron County Medical Care Facility gather for a photo with Sandra Stimson, executive director of the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners, during a recent two-day training course.

CRYSTAL FALLS—Over 70 staff members at the Iron County Medical Care Facility recently received special training by the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners of New Jersey in order to become certified.

The training is an approach to prepare the staff for addressing behavioral issues and needs of residents with dementia. A new memory care unit, the Willow Living Center, should be fully operational and running by early spring.

In May 2010, a feasibility study was conducted by Plant and Moran, which substantiated that there was a need for 24 more memory care beds. Once identified, a decision was made to look at redirecting 20 of the current 200 beds to memory care, to make a total of 44 beds available for this population.

Once the project was approved by the Iron County Board of Commissioners and the Iron County Human Services Board, further research was done as to how the Medicare can enhance its memory care unit to make it a state of the art program.

The new unit will allow for more space and a more conducive environment for the residents to live and the staff to work. It is the goal that all staff working on the memory care unit be certified in dementia care.

According to a spokesperson, approach, environment and understanding are key factors of making a successful memory care unit and that the Iron County Medical Care Facility understands this and is doing everything possible to stand out as a leader in dementia care.

During the staff training, Sandra Stimson, executive director of the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners, provided a two-day training course, which included "train the trainer" courses for four nurses who were chosen as trainers for new staff.

"I felt it was really important that our staff receive specialized training for this unit," Jill Nocerini, doctor of nursing practice, said. "Instead of using just medication to calm a patient, we will use things from their life as a way to calm their agitation."

The staff will learn about new residents before they begin living in the unit and they will focus on the family involvement to get to know the patient's social history.

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