

Uniting Care, an agency of the Uniting Church, operates Woodfield Abrina Nursing Home, caring for 63 residents of Chinese background. The home, in Ashfield, New South Wales, is one of three homes in the Woodfield Retirement Village. Through innovative programs, and research and cooperation with other organisations, Woodfield Abrina shows dedication to quality care and meeting residents' cultural and spiritual needs and preferences.

Woodfield Abrina has implemented an organisation-wide **Wellness Program**. The program offers not only the chance to improve fitness, but also develop socialisation and enhance well being. The program assists falls prevention, aims to improve overall balance and strength, reduces depression and pain, increases energy, improves natural sleep patterns and assists continence management. The organisation has recognised that physical activity is both functional and fun, and brings important health benefits to all age groups, while also offering significant opportunities for positive socialisation and communication. Woodfield has identified that the better the person feels, the more enjoyment they are likely to get from life and the more independence they can enjoy. Residents comment that they are experiencing many benefits through the program, including increased mobility, physical fitness, strength, and improved sleep.

Individual plans are regularly evaluated for each resident and Woodfield Abrina's associated activities program caters for the specific cultural needs and preferences of its residents, with the inclusion of t'ai chi routines, a Chinese speaking music therapist, and the provision of Cantonese cable television channels and Chinese newspapers. A Chinese opera company has entertained residents, and it is planned to be an annual event. Resident feedback led to the development of the 'birthday wish' program, where residents choose what they would like to do to celebrate their birthday. Since the program began in July 2003, residents have chosen to go out to lunch to a restaurant of their choice, have a *yum-cha* meal or go on an outing. A survey conducted in May 2003 indicated that 100 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the range of activities provided, and felt that their cultural needs and preferences were being met.

Successful initiatives are incorporated into the daily operation of the home, and staff job descriptions have been re-written to reflect elements of the Wellness Program.

Management and continuous improvement

Woodfield Abrina has had a formal process-based management system in place since 1999. Continuous improvement is the generator of the system and the system incorporates both preventative and reactive elements. These include scheduled audits, surveys, improvement logs, continuous improvement reports, action plans, data collection and analysis, and hazard reporting.

Any issues raised or identified through these means are investigated and acted on, all parties are kept informed throughout process, with the matter remaining 'open' until it is clear that it has been resolved.

Residents and relatives feel confident to raise issues, and receive regular feedback from staff and management on matters raised, either directly or through meetings or newsletters. All new staff are orientated to the principles and processes for improving residents outcomes.

Staff use the home's open communication systems to suggest improvements for residents, and commonly research any area where they see opportunities for improving practice.

There has been a general shift in the reporting of improvement logs from merely using them to identify problems, to staff, residents and relatives using the improvement logs to identify solutions and suggest improvements.

Strategic plans are informed through the management systems and are based on the philosophy of the organisation. Strategic planning includes a study into future needs for aged care services. The findings of the study have led to Woodfield Abrina drafting plans for further building works to better meet the specific needs and preferences of residents (eg Buddhist and Catholic prayer areas, and a snoezelen room). The strategic plan and updates on progress are available for residents, families and staff to review and comment on, and are discussed at resident and family meetings. Residents comment that they are extremely satisfied with their level of involvement in the development of services and improvement of service provision.

Benchmarking

The home played a pivotal role in developing an organisational benchmarking program between **five** other organisations that serve over 1500 aged care residents. As part of benchmarking practices, the home collects data across approximately 20 key indicators that cover all aspects of the operation. The main drive of the organisational benchmarking is through a working committee that meets every two months and consists of representatives from all the organisations in order to share results and information. These representatives are managers and staff who disseminate the information and results and filter it through the facilities. The committee continually reviews the measures used, and develops additional indicators when the need is identified. There is a clear set of terms of reference for the committee, which are updated annually.

The benchmarking program has provided Woodfield Abrina with a formal process, which enables the home to continually review and compare the practices and processes used and improve on them to deliver a quality service for all stakeholders.

Sharing knowledge

Woodfield Abrina is currently involved in a skin care project with other homes in the benchmarking group, an area in which the home is particularly strong. The home hosts representatives from other homes in the group to enable them to gather information.

Staff and management of Woodfield Abrina have presented papers and videos to industry and academic organisations locally and internationally on its approach to benchmarking and the Wellness Program.

Contact:

Director of Nursing

email: kam@woodfieldagedcare.com.au

website: www.woodfieldagedcare.com.au