



The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency

Lourdes Nursing Home is operated by Catholic Care of the Aged and provides high care to 115 residents. The home, located in Port Macquarie, New South Wales, has produced high level outcomes for residents especially in its approaches to continuous improvement and improving resident lifestyle.

Management at Lourdes have a long-term plan to rebuild the home and relocate residents; in the meantime maintenance and structural improvements are being carried out with little to no disturbance to residents. Feedback from most of the residents about the building project is positive.

There is an obvious commitment to responding to residents' and relatives' comments and suggestions. Staff and resident feedback is gathered using questionnaires, comments and complaints, continuous improvement logs, staff and resident meetings, and family conferences. Residents and relatives praise management and staff for their willingness to listen and responsiveness.

There is an effective continuous improvement system that captures input from residents, relatives, staff and the community, and is used to generate improvements. It is evident that there is a culture of listening to new ideas, thinking outside the normal boundaries and trying new approaches to old problems.

Feedback from stakeholders is welcomed and many of the home's improvements are responses to comments and complaints. These include the introduction of 'Living Will' involving resident advanced directives; resident input to the outdoor area barbecue project; and the introduction of a smoother resident admission process. Other benefits for staff include the provision of training in grading and treatment of ulcers, and upgrades to the home's lifting machines.

Lourdes has a strong commitment to staff training and development, and management understand the link between staff knowledge and their competence in daily duties. Programs such as the sleep project are underpinned with training programs including videos and learning activity packages for night staff to improve their understanding of resident sleep patterns. Management have implemented a staff health initiative, offering reduced gym memberships, fitness assessments and pastoral care and counselling.

A **Sleep Program** was initiated following concerns raised regarding the use of night sedation. The medication committee researched residents' sleep patterns, better staff practices, and medication prescription and administration. Changes have been introduced including: staff education and revision of practices; changes of prescribing sedation; silent call alerts; and the installation of lighting with dimmer switches. Resident sleep patterns have improved and staff workload and levels of stress have decreased.

The **Issues Committee** reviews issues that do not have simple, legal, or straightforward solutions. Issues of concern to residents, staff and management include management of residents' finances, smoking on the premises, and alcohol. Recommendations can be made to the organisation's Advisory Council regarding policy or procedural changes. The committee has formal guidelines and processes and an ethics committee can be accessed for advice. The committee provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to have their say.

The pastoral care coordinator supervises projects that focus on meeting the spiritual needs and preferences of residents. These projects represent achievements beyond the requirements of accreditation and are examples of the organisation's mission vision and values in operation.

The pastoral care coordinator has established **carer support groups** to assist carers with friends and relatives in the home. Carers are allocated to groups held either in the morning or afternoon for 1.5 to 2 hours, according to their preference. Over eight weeks, relatives and resident representatives share experiences and in many cases friendships form. Four groups of relatives have attended the support groups since 2002. Relatives comment that the support groups are very helpful during times of need and many of the friendships formed between carers have continued. The organisation is in the process of publishing a carer support group manual.

Lourdes arranged a meeting between a resident who was afraid that they would not see their elderly mother again. Management and staff arranged transport and accommodation for the resident's mother to visit Lourdes. Both the resident and their mother were delighted to see each other and were grateful to the home for bringing them together.

The home organised and paid for a **memorial service** for a resident with no family in Australia. This shows effort well beyond compliance with the Accreditation Standards. The surviving family member contacted staff and management of the home to show their appreciation.

The **Partnership Run** is an organisation-wide project that enables residents and relatives to maintain contact with the community by providing a bus service to pick up and return people to the home, nearby churches or relatives and friends. The Partnership Run has been in operation since 1999; pick up lists show an increase in use of the service from eight people in May 1999, to 23 people in May 2003. The project benefits residents and relatives and enables friendships and relationships to be maintained.

The **Falls Prevention Project** aims to reduce resident falls and fractures. A multidisciplinary approach is used to investigate and manage the project. A new risk-assessment tool has been developed from a similar acute hospital tool. Residents are assessed and a program of exercise, exposure to sunshine and increased calcium intake is provided after obtaining residents' permission. Personal exercise programs are developed for residents, who enjoy the benefits to their health and wellbeing. Data collected since the program began in 1999, shows that hip fractures resulting from falls have reduced by 62 per cent.

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