Dementia Care in Long-Term Care Facilities

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Committing Persons Due to Dementia

- Older Montanans with dementia committed to Montana State Hospital.
- In 2021, 10 persons with dementia committed. None of 10 had mental illness diagnosis.
State Hospitals Are Not Appropriate for Dementia Care

• Until now, I have never heard of commitments due to dementia.
• State hospitals are for persons with mental illness.
Dementia Common in Long-Term Care Facilities

- 48% of nursing facility residents have dementia.
- 42% of assisted living facility residents have dementia.

- Dementia is a progressive disease.
- Likely that:
  - Facility resident will develop dementia, or
  - Dementia will worsen.
Federal Nursing Facility Law

• Applies to any facility that accepts Medicare and/or Medicaid.

• Broad application, because almost every facility accepts Medicare or Medicaid.
Federal Law re: Dementia Care

• Must provide necessary behavioral health care so that resident can attain or maintain highest practicable level of functioning.

• Services based upon assessment and care plan.

• Resident and resident’s representative participate in care plan development.
Nursing Facility Staff

• Nursing staff must have “appropriate competencies and skills.”

• Certified nurse aides with at least 75 hours of individual training.

• Must pass written and hands-on tests.
Dementia Covered in Nursing Facility Training

• Training for nurse aides must address dementia care, including
  • Meeting needs of residents with dementia;
  • Communicating with residents;
  • Understanding behavior;
  • Appropriate responses to behavior; and
  • How to reduce effects of dementia.
Assisted Living Based on State Law

• Licensing standards set by state law.
• Even name of licensure type varies from state to state.
  • E.g., assisted living, personal care home, residential care facility for the elderly.
44 States Requiring Dementia Training in Assisted Living

• Standards for
  • Basic licensure, and/or
  • Specialization in dementia care.

• My Opinion: Training requirements better as part of basic licensure, since dementia is so common among older adults who require assisted living care.
Arizona Basic Licensure

• 62 hours of training for direct-care staff, including 8 hours in dementia care.
  • Meeting resident needs;
  • Communicating;
  • Understanding behavior; and
  • Reducing effects of dementia.
Training in Specialized Facilities

• Alabama: Staff must complete dementia training series developed by state agency.

• Arkansas: Additional 30 hours, including dementia treatment, dementia stages, behavior management, and communications.
Training in Specialized Facilities (cont.)

- Maine: Additional 16 hours of training, including “activity focused care,” how to deal with “difficult” behaviors, and family issues.
- Massachusetts: 7 additional hours, including therapeutic environments and how to interpret expressions of distress.
Summary

• Long-term care facilities should be prepared to address needs of older persons with dementia.

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