

Long Term Care Nurses: Proud, Passionate and Professional

As an experienced Long Term Care (LTC) Nurse, I am keenly aware of the “myths and misconceptions” regarding my chosen area of practice. As such, I am dedicated to educating the healthcare community, as well as the community at large, about the unique characteristics, professionalism, dedication and expanded skills sets held by nurses who have chosen this noblest of practice areas, caring for our nation’s elderly.

Our keen respect for elders feeds the passion for the delivery of high quality care while maintaining quality of life for the residents and patients we serve. We develop strong relationships with the residents and families, and in fact, these relationships are often the reason we remain working in such challenging environments. These relationships become partnerships and there is no greater reward than when a resident or family recognizes and embraces you like a “member of the family”. What a tribute to the dedicated LTC nurse!

We uphold a rehabilitative focus during care delivery in order to optimize the resident’s current abilities and to minimize decline. This requires us to attain and maintain a thorough understanding of the principles of rehabilitation and restorative practice ***and*** the ability to apply such practices during care delivery.

We provide care to diverse populations with multiple co-morbidities, disease processes, cognitive and functional limitations, with a variety of specific needs. A LTC nurse may care for post-operative patients, neurological, orthopedic, infectious diseases and or Alzheimer and dementias residents. We care for those needing short stay care, long-term rehab, permanent residence, palliative and hospice care. We care for young and old alike.

We work as part of the team as well as at times quite independently, both of which requires us to exhibit good critical thinking skills, be self-motivated and self-directed. We need to be able to identify changes in condition, have strong physical assessment skills, know how to administer first aid rapidly and respond appropriately. We work as primary caregivers, team members, leaders, supervisors, mentors and managers.

We serve as “educators” as we discuss care plans, medication regimens, safety awareness, fall prevention, skin care, nutrition, disease processes and the effects of aging with our residents and their family members. We are advocates for care and services.

As such we need a much broader and expanded skill set than is understood. On any given day we administer medications, perform treatments and highly skilled wound care, conduct thorough assessments of our residents’ physical, emotional and social needs, develop care plans, document care, provide leadership and direction to other caregivers and team members, while continuing to work collaboratively with the entire interdisciplinary team. I am unaware of any nurse practice setting where such diverse and comprehensive skill sets are required.

Yet, we remain under recognized for all we do, and misunderstood. I am proud of our ability to change with the needs of our residents, patients and practice settings. I have a deep respect for those who have also chosen LTC nursing as their chosen practice setting.

There are opportunities in every city and state nationwide to serve our nation's elderly. I encourage newly licensed nurses and other healthcare professionals to learn more about us by stopping into any nearby elder care facility, whether a licensed nursing home or an assisted living facility, meet the Director of Nursing and see what wonderful opportunities exist. There are direct care positions that often lead to an option for a management position or other promotions if that is what you desire.

We are "Proud, Passionate and Professional"! Join me in promoting the nursing profession and educating others on this most rewarding area of nursing practice, elder and LTC nursing.

Tune in to "**Nurse View**" the only radio show by nurses, for nurses and about nurses! This program airs every Tuesday from 4pm to 5pm EST on 1620 AM or listen in via internet streaming at: www.radiosandysprings.com.

We encourage interested parties to contact us for "**Nurse View**" sponsorships or to participate as a guest speaker.

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