

Home's participation in falls prevention collaboration leads to enhanced practices

Roberta Place's participation in a collaboration aimed at preventing falls for residents in long-term care homes across Canada has resulted in the implementation of new practices that go above and beyond existing standards to keep residents safe.

To be involved with the National Collaborative on the Prevention of Falls in Long-Term Care, homes had to create a program each month focused on preventing falls.

Some of the projects, programs and ideas generated throughout the duration of the home's involvement with the Collaborative—which ran from May 2008 to May 2009—will now be used to enhance safety at the home.

"I think the information sharing was the key—people learning from each other," said Lockwood of the success of the home's participation in the Collaborative.

Of note are monitoring logs, a falls prevention week and monthly falls prevention meetings that have been established at the Jarlette Health Services-owned long term care home, said restorative care coordinator Beth Lockwood.

The Barrie long term care home's fall monitoring log records resident falls to establish patterns, which can help caregivers identify the residents most at risk of falling and encourage discussion on interventions to prevent falls from occurring.

In March, the home had a falls prevention week that was aimed at raising awareness about the issue of falls in the home. The week was also used to encourage staff members to think about ways to mitigate falls.

Because the week was successful at engaging staff members, Lockwood says the home will likely continue this in the future.

Additionally, staff members at Roberta Place are now participating in monthly 'fall huddles,' or meetings aimed at examining ways to prevent falling injuries at the home. **LTC**

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Homes anticipate positive effects from TURN study

Two long term care homes taking part in a revolutionary study to determine the optimal turn schedule that will prevent residents from acquiring pressure ulcers anticipate a positive change in practice as a result of the research. Currently, residents at risk of acquiring a pressure ulcer are turned every two hours.

According to a researcher involved in the study, the two-hour turn policy stems from research conducted in the 1950s when mattresses were made of coil and un-breathable plastic and has yet to be challenged or updated.

Gayle Stuart, the administrator at Specialty Care Mississauga, said the home was approached by researchers to participate in the international study. She said Specialty Care is known for being innovative and receptive to trying new things and staff members at the home were intrigued by the opportunity.

"To be a part of something that is going to change practice that's been rooted in studies that were done in the 1950s is pretty awesome for us," said Stuart. "We jumped at it."

Changing practice could result in improved quality of life for residents and a decreased workload for staff members as a result of less turning, added Stuart.

Residents who are 65 and older, and who are at risk of developing pressure ulcers, but do not have an existing pressure ulcer are asked to participate. After informed consent is obtained, participants are provided with a new high-density foam mattress.

The residents are then randomly selected to be turned every two, three or four hours to discover the optimal turn schedule to prevent pressure ulcers.

While the data collected from residents is sent to a laboratory in the United States, Stuart whose 160-bed home has almost 60 participants in the study, says Specialty Care Mississauga has experienced several promising outcomes from using different turn schedules.

"What we are seeing is that the residents who are less frequently turned are happier in the mornings," she said, adding residents are often disrupted from their night's sleep because of the turn schedule.

"The good news is we haven't seen any negative impacts—if we were to see that, obviously those people would be pulled off the study."

Leisureworld Caregiving Centre Lawrence is another home participating in the study. Associate director of care Molly White said staff members have embraced the research project in hopes of finding a better approach to turning and repositioning residents.

"For years residents have been disrupted from their sleep to be turned every two hours and I don't think all of them require that turning," she said.

By updating the practice, White said it will provide residents a better quality of life and more opportunity for social interaction. **LTC**

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