



Lakeview Health Center

Owned and Operated by:

County of La Crosse, Wisconsin

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October 6, 2015

TO: Members of the Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia

FROM: Wanda Plachecki, MA, NHA

RE: Testimony related to caring for individuals with dementia and challenging behavioral symptoms and recommendations

INTRODUCTION

My name is Wanda Plachecki and I am the administrator of the Lakeview Health Center long term care campus in West Salem, WI. Lakeview Health Center has been a regional provider of care and support to individuals with challenging behavioral symptoms for over 125 years. As part of a LaCrosse County system, we work collaboratively with our community and the region. Lakeview is also one of three "commission" facilities in the State. Our commission, the Mississippi Valley Health Services (MVHS), provides a mechanism for its 13 member counties to share in the cost of placement of individuals who need specialized care.

LAKEVIEW HEALTH CENTER INFORMATION

Lakeview Health Center nursing home currently is licensed for 86 residents. Over 90% of our residents are on Medical Assistance and approximately 30% of our residents are members of a Family Care managed care organization. Our estimated Medicaid loss for 2015 is \$97/day. 60% of our residents have a primary diagnosis of Alzheimer's or a related dementia. These individuals were referred to our facility due to challenging behavioral symptoms, including threatening behaviors, physical aggression, wandering, and symptoms which impacted their quality of life and safety in home or other long term care settings. We utilize a variety of individualized approaches to support these residents, including enhanced staff supervision, specialized training, root cause analysis to assess behaviors, individualized approaches based on resident history and person-centered care, and environmental modifications such as quiet sensory spaces. We also have psychiatric support available to assist us in our care and support.

The LaCrosse County Board and the MVHS commission support Lakeview's mission and recently authorized a replacement campus. Construction on a small nursing home constructed in a household model along with construction of a behavioral health State licensed nursing home and two assisted living facilities has begun with occupancy expected in late 2016.

CHALLENGES

However, there are instances when we are unable to care for individuals within our current setting due to the intensity of the behavioral symptom and the limitations of the nursing home setting. **Individuals with intense behavioral symptoms do not have an appropriate placement in our region for crisis stabilization and long term care and support.**

The impact on individuals in the LaCrosse region is that people are admitted to an acute care setting for a medical issue and remain in the hospital setting long after the acute medical issue is resolved because the behavioral symptoms prevent placement at an area assisted living or nursing home. Over the past two years, both hospital systems in our region have experienced issues with long term stays of several months for individuals with dementia and challenging behavioral symptoms. **Although this represents a very small number of individuals, the cost to care for people in an acute care setting is very high and the diminished quality of life for the individual is of great concern to all stakeholders.**

CREATIVE COLLABORATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing that effective solutions come from creative community collaboration, our LaCrosse region has convened several stakeholder meetings to outline issues specific to our community. A result of these meetings was the development of an outline of ideas that could positively impact area residents. **Ideas specific to care and support for individuals with challenging behaviors included:**

- **Development of a dementia crisis unit to assist in stabilization of individuals with challenging behavioral symptoms – these settings would require additional medical and behavioral support staff**
- **Development of a mobile crisis unit to support individuals with dementia – this may include in-home supports when needed during a crisis situation and assistance in training and development of a crisis plan**
- **Development of an individualized community care plan process to promote consistent care across the continuum**

These stakeholder meetings generated a lot of participation and support from the area hospitals, long term care providers, advocates, law enforcement, Aging departments, County Human Service systems, and support groups, but **implementation cannot happen without action at a State level to address issues related to licensure and funding.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. If you have further questions, please contact me at 608-786-1400 or wplachecki@lacrossecounty.org.