



Alzheimer's Community Care – 2016 Palm Beach County Impact 100 Recipient

Summary of the Issue:

Florida has the highest per capita incidence of Alzheimer's disease in the nation. The need for nurses specially trained in community-based dementia-specific care is essential to meeting the needs of our aging population. Alzheimer's Community Care (ACC) has developed a unique educational experience for nursing students that includes hands-on practicum training at its Specialized Alzheimer's Day Centers in Delray Beach and Boca Raton and classroom instruction about behavior management and caregiver support. ACC is expanding this educational experience that was piloted in 2014 with 54 nursing students to now include students enrolled at FAU, PBSC, Keiser and Palm Beach Atlantic.

Summary of Alzheimer's Community Care's Approach:

In the classroom, ACC provides students with orientation which includes the latest information on clinical and behavioral approaches for patients with Alzheimer's disease and related neurocognitive disorders. The rationale for the organization's core and "wraparound" services and measurable outcomes are explained.

The students attend clinical rotations within the organization's dementia-specific day centers. In working directly with patients, they learn the constructs of highly individualized plans of care and have the opportunity to observe and appreciate the impact of these plans of care in slowing the cognitive and physical declines characteristic of all neurocognitive disorders.

Summary of Alzheimer's Community Care's Success:

During the Impact 100 grant period, ACC provided **classroom training** to a total of **379** health professions students:

- 214 undergraduate Registered Nursing students
- 7 RNs earning a Bachelor of Science degree
- 5 RNs earning a Master of Science degree
- 5 RNs earning a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree
- 70 Pharmacy students
- 20 Social Work students
- 58 Certified Nursing Assistant students

Pre- and post-testing of students' knowledge of Alzheimer's disease and related neurocognitive disorders reflected a 30% increase in understanding following classroom training.

A total of **209** health professions students completed **clinical rotations** in ACC's specialized adult day centers:

- 175 undergraduate Registered Nursing students
- 7 RNs earning a Bachelor of Science degree
- 3 RNs earning a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree
- 24 Certified Nursing Assistant students

One of our Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students was in the Palm Beach Atlantic University's first DNP graduating class having completed an extensive study of the prevalence of symptoms of Lewy body disease, an emerging issue in advancing accurate diagnosis for irreversible symptoms of dementia. Bachelor's, Master's and DNP students continue to study substantive issues, such as falls, polypharmacy, caregiver education, etc.

ACC worked with four local Colleges/Universities:

- Palm Beach Atlantic University
- Palm Beach State College
- Florida Atlantic University
- Keiser University

Distance Universities for Master of Science students included:

- Grand Canyon University
- American Sentinel University

ACC also partnered with CareerSource for eight hours of classroom training for its Certified Nursing Students.

Students participating in day center clinical rotations completed evaluations of their experiences. These evaluations included Likert scale responses to five questions designed to elicit the value of the clinical rotation: 99.4% were "strongly agree" or "agree" with no "disagree" responses. More compelling were the very positive narrative comments the students provided.

Summary of Alzheimer's Community Care's Sustainability:

The Impact 100 grant provided ACC with the opportunity to expand training to a greater number of nursing students, and to students of interdisciplinary professions, such as social work and pharmacy. We have built very strong affiliations with the Colleges and Universities listed above, all having strong commitment to continuing to partner with ACC for classroom and clinical rotation experiences. ACC is committed to continuing to engage with students on their campuses, and invite them into our day centers for these learning experiences. We believe that it is vital for rising health professionals to appreciate the innovative approaches that best serve families with Alzheimer's disease and related neurocognitive disorders.