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Published May 16, 2009 12:55 am - Caring for elderly citizens with dementia can take patience and understanding. Employees at Rivermont Retirement Center in Norman who care for dementia or Alzheimer's disease patients are required to receive certification from the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners, according to Melva Noakes, executive director of Rivermont Retirement Center.

Workers receive certification

By Meghan McCormick

Caring for elderly citizens with dementia can take patience and understanding.

Employees at Rivermont Retirement Center in Norman who care for dementia or Alzheimer's disease patients are required to receive certification from the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners, according to Melva Noakes, executive director of Rivermont Retirement Center.

Noakes said she is certified by the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners as a dementia practitioner instructor.

"I teach on the disease process of dementia, and the staff is required to receive eight hours of continuous education on dementia certification," Noakes said.

She said the course teaches care takers about "bath time battles, re-direction, de-escalation, medications and their side affects." Employees must complete lesson plans.

"Once they finish with that, they attend the instruction class, clinicals and receive national certification," Noakes said.

Noakes said employees are required to have a high school diploma and seven hours of comprehensive dementia curriculum that has been approved by NCCDP.

"The certification is good for two years," she said. "They will need to renew certification and continue 10 hours of training on dementia or Alzheimer's."

Noakes said workers also must have three years of experience in a health related field.

"They have to be a CNA, LPN or RN," she said.

So far, about 17 employees have completed NCCDP certification, Noakes said. The course not only helps caregivers, but also families with dementia patients.

"It helps us talk to the families on the disease process," Noakes said. "It helps to understand the side affects on the medication and it also helps us understand the different stages of dementia they go through and work with them in de-escalation and re-direction behaviors."

Noakes said any staff member who directly cares for assisted living residents or those afflicted with dementia are required to have the certification. The certification process takes about four to six weeks to complete.

She said Rivermont Retirement Center also offers a support group for dementia caregivers the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Meghan McCormick

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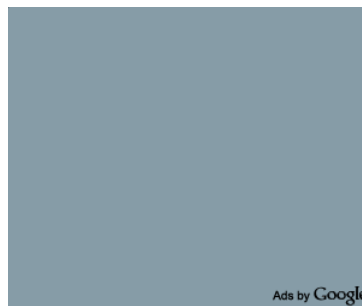
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