

PIN CONNECTION

An Update from ND Partners in Nursing Gerontology Consortium Project

What is happening in the ND Partners in Nursing (PIN) Project?

During late fall of 2010, the Partners in Nursing (PIN) Project was initiated in North Dakota to assure there is a well-prepared, adequate gerontology nursing workforce across the continuum of care settings to meet the needs of older adults. The response for participation from key stakeholders in the state has been exceptional. These stakeholders understand too well the following concerns:

- North Dakota's aging population, along with continued shifts in our population from rural to urban areas, presents a significant challenge to the health care workforce, especially in very rural and frontier counties.
- Just when additional nurses will be needed to care for our growing elderly population, a large cohort of nurses will be reaching retirement age.
- The threat to access to health care, quality of care, safety, and cost is a concern for all North Dakotans and requires a collaborative effort to come up with creative and sustainable strategies.

With Dakota Medical Foundation acting as a catalyst, over 45 partners have come together to develop grassroots strategies for local nursing workforce solutions. (See page 4 for a list of current partners) This unique approach of involving many groups outside the nursing field brings new perspective, energy, and synergy to respond to the problems of our state. The PIN partnership, which has had two Consortium meetings so far, has already proven great value in the building of relationships and developing a better understanding of the concerns held by respective stakeholders.

The organizational structure being used to implement the project includes the full Consortium of partners which meets regularly and smaller work groups formed around the main goals of the project. The work groups are as follows:

- Education – to strength gerontology education for nursing students and the current gerontology health care workforce
- Positive Image – to enhance the image of working with older adults across all settings of care
- Recruitment – to promote recruitment and retention efforts which encourage traditional and non-traditional students to nursing as a career, with a special focus on rural and Native American and Latino high school students
- Sustainability – to provide for the sustainability of project activities beyond the grant period

Work group members have been meeting between the full Consortium meetings to develop strategies, activities, and tools that will help achieve the project's goals. The electronic Blackboard organizational site is being used to communicate and to facilitate effective and efficient meetings of partners located across the state. Please view the project website for a complete description of the scope of activities being considered or implemented: www.ndsu.edu/pin



Long Term Care Staff Respond to Needs of Elderly During Mouse River Flood

The dedication of hundreds of long term care staff members caring for residents affected by the recent rising river waters, flooding, and evacuation in the state is commendable. It emphasizes how important it is to have well-trained and compassionate staff to make sure the needs of the elderly are met; precisely what the Partners in Nursing project is about. A special thank you goes to Kaylene Kitelinger, Administrator, Souris Valley Care Center, Velva, ND, for providing the story below about her staff's experience during the Mouse River flood.

The Souris Valley Care Center (SVCC) in Velva, ND is in the business of taking care of those in need. Employees at the 50-bed long-term care facility are dedicated to being there for the residents and lending a helping hand.

When the Mouse River raged out of its banks in late June, SVCC was asked to step out of its normal boundaries and answer the call for help in the community.

The Mouse, which runs down from Canada - through central North Dakota - and then back up into Canada, had reach record-breaking levels and flow rates and evacuations were taking place up and down the river valley.

The first call for help came on June 1, when the North Dakota Department of Health called SVCC to see if the center could accommodate any residents evacuated from Trinity Homes in Minot. The next day a team of four SVCC employees took the center's van and bus to Trinity Homes and brought 10 Trinity residents, which included three married couples, back to SVCC in Velva.

"No matter where you live, it is scary being evacuated from your home", says director of nursing, Mike Hammer. "My heart just went out to these residents and I am so grateful we were able to bring them here and offer them comfort and care."

Hammer explains that there was not staff in place at SVCC to accommodate the influx in residents, so arrangements were made with Trinity for some of their staff to come to Velva. "I was expecting a bit of chaos when it came to bringing in 10 new residents and several new staff members into the care center within a matter of a couple days," he says. "But I was pleasantly surprised how smooth the transition went. There was never a glitch in resident care, the new residents and staff from Trinity blended in pretty well, and we just kept on with business as usual."

As the Mouse River continued to rise and leave its banks, roads in Minot and throughout the river valley closed, making travel to and from the Care Center challenging. "Some staff were driving up to 70 extra miles just to get here, says Hammer. "That is the kind of dedication we saw again and again throughout this flood ordeal - people just doing what needed to be done to insure our residents got the best care always."

In late June, flooding concerns centered on the city of Velva. "The river was causing havoc upstream, say SVCC marketing director Emily Tescher-Johnston. "Burlington, Minot and Logan had experienced a devastating hit by the Souris and Sawyer was battling around the clock to keep the river within their dike system. We knew it was only going to be a matter of time before the city of Velva had to face some serious water concerns."

Kaylene Kitelinger, started as the center's new administrator on June 21, 2011. Two days later, the Governor of North Dakota Jack Dalrymple declared a mandatory evacuation for the city of Velva by 6 p.m. on June 25. This caused a plethora of concerns for SVCC.

"We had several staff members who had to evacuate their own homes, or family member's homes," Kitelinger says. "We knew we didn't need to worry about the river reaching us up here, but we were concerned about our staff and worried about the infrastructure of our town in terms of sewer, water, power, and those types of concerns."

Kitelinger held an all-staff meeting and told workers who needed to leave, that they could go, and in the meantime calls were put out to non-affected staff members to see who could come in.

“I can honestly say that at no time did we feel overwhelmingly short-staffed, says Kitelinger. “Those who had to go – went – and those who could come in just flowed in and picked up shifts. I was so impressed, staff understood the seriousness of the situation and they did not hesitate to come in.”

As staff moved out of their homes, some set up camp in the grass behind Valley View Manor. “It worked out really well to be able to set my camper right here,” says Hammer. “I could be close by the center and have my family here too, so that took a lot of stress out of the situation.”

As the center worked to accommodate evacuating staff, Kitelinger was receiving around-the-clock calls from several entities who requested to use the care center as an emergency location. “I got calls from the National Guard, Velva City Hall, the Sheriff’s Department, Velva Drug and others. Folks knew the care center was in a dry and safe location, and they wanted to use our facility.”

SVCC was able to accommodate City Hall, and the National Guard and the Velva Drug. Megan Krueger, pharmacist and co-owner of Velva Drug, says “We were allowed to use an apartment at Valley View Manor to set up and run the pharmacy. It was handy and convenient for our customers and it worked great. We were very appreciative that the care center gave us a spot. “

Kitelinger adds, “I would not say it was organized chaos - it was better than that, we kept putting out fires behind the scenes, and I don’t think our residents really ever knew how much was going on up here.”

She continues, “The front line staff did an amazing job, focusing on the residents. When they were here working, it wasn’t about the flood or the evacuation, it was about the residents, just like it is on a normal day. That is one of the things I am really proud of, how we kept the residents from feeling the stress and anxiety of the flooding situation.”



The photos are from 2011 Souris river flood near Velva, North Dakota

Source: <http://blogs.sacbee.com/photos/2011/06/water-filling-2500-homes-in-mi.html#ixzz1VCsg7sxq>

Consortium Partners

- Dakota Medical Foundation
- North Dakota State University
- University of Mary
- Sitting Bull College
- Jamestown College
- Minot State University
- Williston State College
- University of Minnesota
- Bismarck State College
- Mayville State University
- Dakota College Bottineau
- University of North Dakota
- Dickinson State University
- Lake Region State College
- ND State College of Science
- NDSU Extension Mercer County
- United Tribes Technical College
- Fort Berthold Community College
- NDSU Tribal College Partnerships
- Cankdeska Cikana Community College
- ND AARP
- ND Board of Nursing
- ND Center for Nursing
- ND Nurses Association
- ND Hospital Association
- ND Health Care Review
- ND Department of Health
- ND Home Care Association
- ND Chamber of Commerce
- ND Mental Health of America
- ND Department of Commerce
- ND Long Term Care Association
- ND Department of Human Services
- ND Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
- ND Department of Career & Technical Education
- National Assoc. Directors Of Nursing Administration
- Medcenter One
- Howe Enterprises
- Sanford Health, Fargo
- Dakota Nursing Program
- SIA Marketing & Insurance
- Advanced Nursing Solutions
- Migrant Health Services Inc.
- Elim Rehab and Care Center
- Catholic Health Initiatives Fargo
- Traill County Health Department
- LaMoure County Health Department
- Office for the Elimination of Health Disparities
- Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas



New Program Serves Health Care Needs of State's Older Adults

In 2007, the University of North Dakota (UND) College of Nursing developed a Gerontology Nursing Track with funds from a Health Resource and Services Administration (HRSA) grant. The driving force behind developing this new program was the state's growing elderly population and the complex health care needs of this group. The Gerontological Nursing Track meets the increased need for advanced practice nurses with expertise in gerontology.

According to Christine C. Harsell, Co-Director of the Gerontological Nursing Track, the first class of 2 students graduated in 2010 and a class of 4 students graduated in May 2011. The class of 2012 includes 14 students from 3 states, all of whom have started their clinical coursework this summer. Currently offered is a Master's degree in nursing with courses preparing students to become either a Gerontological Nurse Practitioner (GNP) or a Gerontological Clinical Nurse Specialist (GCNS).

Recently, the PIN Project Coordinator met a recent graduate of this program, Kelly Leiphon, and was impressed with her passion for older adults and her excitement to be using her skills and expertise to make their life better. Kelly is a great example of the younger population having a positive image of working with older adults.

For more information about the UND Gerontology Nursing Program, see:

<http://www.nursing.und.edu/grad/gerontology/index.cfm>

Interview with a Gerontology Nursing Program Graduate



Kelly Leiphon (GNP-BC)

Would you tell me a little personal history, such as where you grew up?

Kelly Leiphon: I grew up in Edmore, ND. It is a small town about 40 miles Northeast of Devils Lake. After graduating high school from Edmore, I attended Lake Region State College (LRSC) in Devils Lake. I received my practical nursing certificate and worked as Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) for one year before moving to Grand Forks to attend The University of North Dakota (UND) for my undergraduate degree. After completing my BS in nursing, I continued on to graduate school and this May I obtained a Master of Science degree in the gerontology nurse practitioner program.

Why did you decide to become a nurse?

Kelly Leiphon: I had a few different influences that drew me to nursing. First, I have an aunt and older sister that are both nurses, and they talked often of the rewards of nursing. Another major influence was from my own experience as a patient in the hospital. I was in high school and was very ill with severe abdominal pain. I felt that the physician overseeing my care didn't believe my concerns. I felt he didn't listen to me because I was too young. He actually had discharged me from the hospital and I was scared that I wouldn't get help and that no one wanted to help me. The nurse assisting me with getting my shoes and coat on listened to my concerns and agreed that I should not be going home. She talked to the physician and I eventually saw a surgeon as I had a ruptured appendix. I don't know what I would have done if she hadn't advocated on my behalf. Another influence was when I started working as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). I fell in love with taking care of others, especially the elderly.

What drew you to the GNP program at UND?

Kelly Leiphon: I really didn't know that nurse practitioners could be certified in gerontology until I moved to Grand Forks for my undergraduate degree. I started working part-time as an LPN at a nursing home in Grand Forks. A Gerontological Nurse Practitioner (GNP) came to see patients every weekday. It greatly improved quality and continuity of care compared to the nursing homes I had worked for that did not have a GNP that visited regularly. The GNP knew the patients and being on site helped with better treatment plans. I had always hoped to come back to Devils Lake after I graduated, and I wanted to be able to give the same service to the nursing homes in that community. I was so fortunate that UND developed the program when I was an undergraduate student. It was too much of a coincidence for me not to apply, and I was encouraged to do so by some faculty members at UND.

What student nurse experiences did you have that exemplified your nursing choice?

Kelly Leiphon: I don't know if I could point to a specific experience, but what I love about working with geriatric patients is that it exemplified why I went into nursing. I feel the focus when working in geriatrics is to come up with ways to make their lives a little easier, a little better. I know I won't be able to cure chronic diseases, but perhaps I can help slow disease progression, maintain quality of life, and ensure that their needs are met. This is why I went into nursing, to make lives better, and one of the greatest honors of my life has been taking care of the elderly.

What are you doing now for your employment? What is most rewarding about it?

Kelly Leiphon: I just started working two weeks ago for Altru Clinic-Lake Region in Devils Lake. The job is still pretty fresh, but I already enjoy the other providers, nursing staff, and support staff. I feel rewarded when patients follow the treatment plan, and come back to the office excited about how well it worked.

What would you say to nursing students (or high school students possibly considering nursing as a career) about the opportunities and rewards of working with older adults?

Kelly Leiphon: I think if nursing students or high school students can get past the stereotypes of aging, they would find working with the elderly is fun and exciting. Just as teenagers don't like being told they are too young, the elderly are told they are too old. Both are a consequence of ageism. Nursing students should realize that they will probably be taking care of older adults in almost any area that they work in as they are a large group that are hospitalized. Working with older adults isn't dull, and they have a lot to offer. I would challenge young adults to make a friend in a retirement home or nursing facility. I believe they would be pleasantly surprised in how rewarding the relationship can be.

Announcement: "One-Day Workshop for Nursing Faculty & Their Nursing Home Clinical Partners"

This interactive workshop will provide effective and innovative strategies to teach geriatric nursing in a nursing home setting. The unique aspect to this workshop is that faculty will work collaboratively with colleagues from their nursing home clinical partners to co-create meaningful learning opportunities for students to learn about the role of the registered nurse in providing care for nursing home residents.

For more information visit: <http://www.nursing.umn.edu/Hartford/ClinicalTeachinginNursingHomes/home.html>

Next Consortium Meeting

North Dakota PIN Gerontology Consortium Project is going to have the next Consortium Meeting on September 7th, 2011 (9:30am -2:30pm)
Kelly Inn, 1800 North 12th Street, Bismarck, ND 58501

RSVP: Jane Strommen (701-231-7238 / jane.strommen@ndsu.edu)

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