**Media Advisory**

Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

Mount Saint Vincent University

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**Families of Nursing Home Residents Recognize Role of Staff**

Living in a nursing home is often viewed as a negative part of later life but there are many ways in which nursing home life can be positive. An important aspect of resident quality of life is for residents to remain connected and engaged with people and activities. Preliminary analysis from surveys completed by nursing home staff and family members of nursing home residents suggest that family members recognize the importance of staff support in maintaining resident engagement in activities, which includes both physical assistance to activities and also continued encouragement to participate. Family members also noted that staff encouragement, keeping them informed and having access to private space for visits helps family members maintain positive relations with the resident. Moreover, preliminary analysis suggests that nursing home staff identify resident autonomy, engagement in activity, and home-likeness as integral to quality of life. The challenge for nursing homes is how to support this important aspect of resident life in a climate of fiscal restraint and increasing demand for staff to provide care services. The ways in which nursing homes meet this challenge is part of a three year study underway in Nova Scotia.

“There are already some interesting findings emerging from our research. We will eventually understand how these findings vary within different models of nursing homes which will help inform decisions about nursing home care,” said Dr. Janice Keefe, the study’s Principal Investigator and Director of the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging. “We are very impressed with the response to the study so far in which more than 500 nursing home staff and more than 200 family members of residents have completed surveys. Also, we have administered surveys in person with more than 300 nursing home residents themselves who greatly appreciate the opportunity to share what it is like to live in their nursing home.”

The focus of the surveys being completed is to learn more about the day-to-day experiences of people who live in, work in and visit nursing home facilities in our province. Specifically, the goal is to find out what are the characteristics of a nursing home that contribute to resident quality of life. According to Dr. Keefe, “The study will be strengthened by more staff and family members participating in the survey, and there is still opportunity for these groups to participate.”

The surveys are part of a nationally funded study entitled, “Care and Construction: Assessing Differences in Nursing Home Models of Care on Resident Quality of Life”. The study will generate evidence to better understand how models of care affect nursing home resident quality of life and its results will enhance outcomes for residents living in nursing homes in Nova Scotia. The project’s team of researchers and key industry leaders are examining the experiences of nursing homes employing different models of care on resident quality of life from the perspectives of resident, family members, and staff. For more information on the study visit www.careandconstruction.ca

Nova Scotians could see improvements in nursing home care resulting from research conducted by Mount Saint Vincent University’s (the Mount) Nova Scotia Centre on Aging and its partners.

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The project, “Care and Construction: Assessing Differences in Nursing Home Models of Care on Resident Quality of Life,” is being led by a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral team including researchers and decision makers and has been funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation. The survey is one component of the study which also includes case studies at three nursing homes, focus groups and in depth interviews.

To find more about the project contact 457-6218, 1-877-302-4440, careandconstruction@msvu.ca or visit the project website at www.careandconstruction.ca.

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