**Media Advisory**

Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

Mount Saint Vincent University

Halifax, NS – November 25, 2013

**Study reveals relationships and homelike environment key to quality of life in NS nursing homes**

Researchers and nursing home representatives have teamed up to undertake important research on the residents’ quality of life in Nova Scotia nursing homes.

“This is the first large scale Canadian research that examines the perspective of residents, family members and staff in the long-term care sector.” says Dr. Janice Keefe, the study’s Principal Investigator and Director of the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging.

More than 300 Nova Scotia nursing home residents, 400 family members and 800 staff members have shared their opinions on resident quality of life by completing surveys for the project “Care and Construction”. In-depth interviews with residents, focus groups with family members and a case study have also been completed during the life of the project. The study examined different models of care, defined as physical design and staffing approach, in relation to resident quality of life within Nova Scotia nursing homes.

Overall, the study reveals that residents, staff and families perceive a positive quality of life for residents in Nova Scotia’s nursing homes. Homes that are newly constructed and have different staffing approaches are perceived to have a positive impact on quality of life but a number of factors associated with resident quality of life can be present regardless of the model of care. Residents, family and staff identified that relationships and homelikeness are key elements in supporting resident quality of life. Some aspects of the working environment within the nursing homes are associated with staff perceptions of resident quality of life. The study indicates that there are similarities in how the three different perspectives view resident quality of life but each has unique insights.

“Regardless of who we talked to, families, staff or residents, relationships was a key element in supporting residents' quality of life and as we share these results we want the sector to consider how to enhance those relationships” says Dr. Keefe. “We know there are challenges for the continuing care sector and this research will support decisions about future care practices, the need for education in nursing homes and more broadly will inform decisions related to the expansion and enhancement of the long-term care sector in Nova Scotia.”

The Care and Construction team is both multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral, representing continuing care research, practice and policy. The combination of researchers, nursing home administrators, and sector and government representatives on the research team brings a unique strength to the project.

On Nov 27th the results of the project will be shared with 65-75 representatives from the continuing care sector where the group will reflect on how the results can be used to inform policy and practice. A presentation by Dr. Janice Keefe will be given with reflections by Donna Dill (NS Department of Health and Wellness), Debra Boudreau (Tideview Terrace, Digby & Health Association Nova Scotia Continuing Care Council), Tracy Bonner (Rosecrest Communities), and Ann McInnis (Northwood).  The event is hosted in collaboration with Health Association Nova Scotia. The Workshop will be held from 9:00am to 3:30 pm at the Best Western Hotel, Chocolate Lake.

A presentation will also be given to the residents, family and staff at Ivany place in Bedford on November 29th. The presentation will be given by Dr. Janice Keefe and Ann McInnis. This is one of several that will be given at nursing homes in the coming months.

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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.

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.

For more information please contact:

Elaine MacFadyen

Communications Coordinator

Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

Mount Saint Vincent University

1-902-457-6546 (NSCA Office)

1-902-457-6322 (tel)

1-902-457-6508 (fax)

Elaine.macfadyen@msvu.ca

www.msvu.ca/nsca

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