

ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2019 Interim

October 24, 2019

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 5th meeting of the Alzheimer's and Dementia Workforce Assessment Task Force was held on Thursday, October 24, 2019, at 10:00 AM, in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Robby Mills, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Robby Mills, Co-Chair; Representative Deanna Frazier, Co-Chair; Senators Stephen Meredith and Reginald Thomas; Representatives Danny Bentley and Lisa Willner; Bill Cooper, Steven Davis, Buddy Hoskinson, Mackenzie Longoria, Mary Romelfanger, Philip Travis, and Denise Wells.

Guests: Mark Bowman, Executive Director, Office of Kentucky Veteran Centers, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs; and Chad Helton, Executive Director, Post-Acute Care Facilities Services, Bluegrass Care Navigators.

LRC Staff: Dana L. Simmons, Lead Staff and Becky Lancaster.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2019 meeting was made by Senator Meredith, seconded by Representative Bentley, and approved by voice vote.

Recommendations to Improve Career Mobility and Retention Among Healthcare Workers

Mark Bowman, Executive Director, Office of Kentucky Veteran Centers, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA), stated that the KDVA recognizes the challenges that providers have working with patients that are diagnosed with Alzheimer's and dementia. There are four state veterans' homes in Kentucky. Each of the homes has a secure unit dedicated to patients that are diagnosed with Alzheimer's and dementia. The KDVA has a high percentage of veterans diagnosed with dementia along with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The KDVA uses the standard training methods such as the Hand in Hand training series. Hand in Hand is a core component that is used for the orientation and ongoing training of staff. The KDVA has adopted dementia care programs that are specific to veterans. The Health Resources Services Administration has released

11 new learning modules as an addition to the agency's Alzheimer's disease and related dementia training curriculum. The goal of these modules is to train the primary care workforce about dementia caregiving, but also helps the providers address caregiver needs.

Mr. Bowman stated that the KDVA faces similar challenges as other providers with the lack of workforce. The KDVA works to train and maintain employees. The KDVA is making a commitment of time and programming for nursing assistants on staff. The KDVA believes that the Apprenticeship Program will provide the best opportunities to be successful. The Apprenticeship Program is in high schools but the KDVA would like to expand the program to existing staff. The Apprenticeship Program helps to create a career ladder. The registered Apprenticeship Program is coordinated by the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. There are several levels in the certified nursing assistant apprenticeship program. The third level is a certified nursing assistant that specializes in dementia care. The total approximate amount of hours to complete the third level certified nursing assistant program is 825 to 1,125 hours. The non-flexibility in the state merit system is a challenge for the KDVA. Flexibility is a must with the healthcare workforce. The KDVA believes that it is good to empower and train workers if the workers provide three to four years of quality service to the KDVA.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Mr. Bowman stated that the KDVA workforce turnover rate is approximately 60 to 70 percent. One of the KDVA's facilities has 70 employee vacancies that are ready to be filled. The KDVA has a reduced census because of the workforce vacancies. The KDVA is at a 55 to 60 percent patient capacity rate in most of the facilities because there are so many open positions. The KDVA is taking actions in the upcoming regular session to help address the workforce vacancies. The KDVA wants to begin the Apprenticeship Program and expand it to recruit employees and to be used by others. The KDVA does not want to limit the program to only high school students.

In response to questions and comments from Mr. Hoskinson, Mr. Bowman stated that the KDVA did a study and found that the actual cost of a nurse turnover is \$25,567.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Willner, Mr. Bowman stated that many providers, including the KDVA, have relationships with high schools and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). KCTCS is a big partner and supporter for the KDVA. The KDVA hopes that the Apprenticeship Program will have a positive impact on the workforce. He stated that the Apprenticeship Program needs more community partners that are willing and committed to devote time and training to the program participants.

In response to questions and comments from Ms. Romelfanger, Mr. Bowman stated that the KDVA has approximately 13 female veteran residents. The KDVA will see an increase in female veteran residents as the population rises. The KDVA has a women's

veteran coordinator who is involved at the state level. The KDVA has not had many instances of workplace violence. The KDVA does have some veterans diagnosed with PTSD and/or dementia that may exhibit behaviors that include verbal or physical violence. Some The KDVA locations have an in-house physician, nurse practitioners, or a mental health nurse practitioner dedicated to focus on veterans diagnosed with PTSD.

In response to questions and comments from Ms. Longoria, Mr. Bowman stated that The KDVA can provide the Dementia Care for America's Heroes training program to the Alzheimer's Association and others for training. The KDVA is on the path for dementia specific training but does not have any historical data on outcomes at this time.

Philip Travis, Administrator, Wellington Parc, stated that in 1991, the owners of Wellington Parc started two licensed Alzheimer's nursing home facilities. In 1997, Wellington Parc began to accept Medicare and Medicaid funding. Wellington Parc also accepts private pay and veteran clients. He stated that all staff members must have documented training in the care and handling of Alzheimer's patients. Six hours of continuing education related to Alzheimer's disease are required each quarter. Wellington Parc uses various training programs by Teepa Snow. The Wellington Parc workforce for the 80 bed facility consists of 94 employees that includes 13 direct care nurses, 41 nursing assistants, and 28 support staff employees.

Mr. Travis stated that staffing challenges include employee turnover and the associated costs, facilities that are competing for the same workers, and the competitive wage needed verses the reimbursement rates given to employers. He stated that trying to find new and different ways to retain staff is difficult. Wellington Parc completes Kentucky Applicant Registry and Employment Screening (KARES) background checks on potential employees. KARES is a thorough, fingerprint-based background executed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). He stated that some retention strategies for employees are flexible scheduling, wage reviews, benefits, employee recognition, and a tuition assistance program. The Wellington Parc Association has partnered with the program Fostering Success. The Fostering Success program works with foster youth to provide job opportunities for them. He stated that Wellington Parc had approximately a 37 percent nurse aid turnover rate last year. The national average for nurse aid turnover can average over 100 percent.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Bentley, Mr. Travis stated that six hours is required quarterly by the Alzheimer's nursing home regulation. Since Wellington Parc participates in Medicare and Medicaid, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires 12 hours of continuing education. He stated that Wellington Parc has not had to deal with progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP) but it may be considered a related disorder to Alzheimer's disease. Wellington Parc is seeing more patients with different types of dementia.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Mr. Travis stated that he tries to complete exit interviews prior to the employee leaving. He stated that the higher turnover rates were found with employees that have worked less than one year. There is a very low turnover rate with employees that have worked at least five years. He stated that the individuals coming into the workforce are more likely to leave and go to competing facility for a small raise in pay. He has seen changes with the new generation of employees and has addressed company policies and procedures accordingly. He has also seen changes in the healthcare industry as a provider. There has been a shift for newer residents to request private rooms.

In response to questions and comments from Ms. Longoria, Mr. Travis stated that the overall culture of a facility and the feeling of self-worth in the job have a larger impact on how long the employee stays with the facility. He stated that the patients at Wellington Parc are at various stages of Alzheimer's disease. Some of the activities provided are geared towards higher functioning residents but there are also one-on-one activities for residents that cannot participate in those activities. Wellington Parc has brought in music therapy and library programs from the community for the residents. Wellington Parc holds a monthly support group for the community.

Chad Helton, Executive Director, Post-Acute Care Facilities Service, Bluegrass Care Navigators, stated that Bluegrass Care Navigators serves individuals living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Bluegrass Care Navigators has a long history of expanding services and programs to meet the needs of the community. In 2018, Bluegrass Care Navigators served 1,438 individuals living with the diagnosis of Alzheimer's or some type of dementia. Bluegrass Care Navigators is committed to working with community partners to improve the quality of care provided to all patients and caregivers. Bluegrass Care Navigators recently received a \$1 million grant from the Administration for Community Living and the Administration on Aging to address gaps in services for those living with Alzheimer's and age-related dementia and their caregivers.

Mr. Helton stated that Bluegrass Care Navigators hires and trains the employees with a purpose. He stated that training needs to be scenario based, interactive, and tailored to each community. Bluegrass Care Navigators use Teepa Snow and the Virtual Dementia Training programs. He stated that every day with every shift there is an opportunity for employees to learn from an experience. He stated that many recommendations to retain employees are to pay the staff more, provide better training, require certifications, improve the work environment however, many Kentucky facilities are barely making payroll or maintaining the buildings due to low reimbursements. Bluegrass Care Navigators use Teepa Snow scenario-based training programs. The Virtual Dementia Tour is a hands-on program that allows employees to briefly experience what the patients they are caring for every day go through every day. He suggested to subsidize trainings and to provide incentive for the training.

Mr. Helton stated that Kentucky should make care more attainable. Kentucky should allow all people, no matter their level of income, to have the appropriate care setting at the appropriate time. He stated that Kentuckians are living in skilled nursing facilities when not appropriate because Medicaid will not pay for assisted living. People are staying at home in dangerous conditions because they cannot afford the high costs of assisted living communities. The memory care patients are not the same as the other patients that are served in the community. He stated that Kentucky needs regulations that would encourage more providers to provide memory care without the fear of punitive regulations when dealing with patients with behaviors.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Frazier, Mr. Helton stated that many caregivers and staff start to work in the long-term care industry because of personal experiences with loved ones in long-term care.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Mr. Davis stated that Kentucky has an Alzheimer's regulation that implies that one can provide appropriate care at an assisted living facility but also has the "statement of danger" rule that applies and may restrict who can be admitted to the facility. He stated there is no reimbursement for care provided at personal care homes. He confirmed that Kentucky needs to reform the assisted living and personal care home regulations to create a better continuum of care that would allow individuals to age in place. The state should also be able provide a certain level of nursing care without the patient having to truly meet the nursing home level of care. He stated that as a regulatory agency, the Office of Inspector General (OIG), agrees with the provider community on a reform of the levels of care. The OIG also deals with workforce issues and has to compete for nursing and clinical staff. He stated that the OIG would like to build a classification system that would allow the OIG to attract nursing staff directly from colleges and universities. He would like to see a tuition repayment program implemented. As a regulatory agency there is a large set of regulatory rules, at one time there were 54 levels of care to be maintained.

In response to questions and comments from Ms. Longoria, Mr. Helton stated that Bluegrass Care Navigators is putting together the steps to take and the community partners to share the \$1 million grant from the Administration for Community Living and Administration on Aging.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:39 AM.