

Family Matters



The Newsletter for Sunnyvale Health Care Center

Summer 2011



Santa Clara Roundtable gives facility showcase event

Sunnyvale Health Care Center hosted the first of two major events that thrust the four-star facility into the South Bay's consciousness when it was the site of the Santa Clara Senior Round Table.

The nexus of the regional long-term care industry landed at the facility May 19 with the theme "A Walk Down Memory Lane," aimed at addressing the challenges of dementia and Alzheimer's care. The presentation was led by board member Warren Riley.

"He wanted to show people what the elderly go through when have dementia or Alzheimer's," said operations manager Loree Balis.

In addition to the education aspect of the round table, it gave Sunnyvale a chance to showcase its facility to about 90 movers and

shakers of the local healthcare industry. The courtyard patio was the main site of the gathering, which went a long way toward making the facility a major player in the Bay Area.

"The goal is to bring together people in the industry to network and supplement communication," Loree said.

That response included raves from attendees.

"They liked the facility. They said it's clean and different. They liked the lobby, the staff," Loree said. "Everybody had fun."

Some even came back on another day to get a fuller tour of the facility, and Loree said it has spurred some of those attendees to recommend Sunnyvale Health Care Center to others.

"We were able to network and establish connections," she said. "It was a great response."

SUNNYVALE PREPS FOR NEW GUIDELINES



Meetings help doctors band together

New Medicare guidelines are going into effect in January and Sunnyvale Health Care Center is using the benchmark as an opportunity to improve communication between doctors and staff, all toward improving resident care.

The new rules impose penalties if a resident is re-admitted with the same malady they had upon their earlier admission. It's always an issue where SHCC staff is trying to improve its performance, and to that end, held what will be a bi-annual breakfast of all the facility's physicians.

The main objective was to ensure that everyone was on the same page about the new

guidelines, said a director Maggie Guizar. With the backdrop of a restaurant-style om-

lette bar run by the dietary staff, Director of Nursing Hermie Chavez led a discussion with 10 physicians on what can be done to decrease the frequency of re-hospitalization.

Maggie says while the breakfast was focused on the pending rule changes, the facility hopes to use the event to give the facility's doctors a regular forum to talk about improving resident care.

"There was a lot of back and forth, and suggestions on how we can better our care path and better train our nurses," she said.

It was also a good time to update the physicians on new programs and get their collective



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input on complex cases.

"The meeting was a success," Maggie said. "Next time they can come up with ideas they want to discuss. We want to hold them bi-annually, and the doctors were very much for it."

In the spirit of avoiding readmissions, Hermie is heading a directive aimed at increasing nurse training to lessen the need for doctor and hospital calls. The "care path" is a diagram that can help identify what a symptom might mean and how it can be treated and

streamline treatment.

"They follow this path to avoid calling the doctor when we can take care of it here, and lessen them going to the hospital when we can take care of it here," Maggie said.

This focus on preventative care puts increased responsibility on the facility's nursing staff, but Maggie says they're up to the task.

"Nurses are more trained to take care of more things," she said. "We all have to think out of the bubble."

Mountain View Chamber of Commerce wowed by SHCC



After nine years, Sunnyvale Health Care Center has established a place in the area, and after hosting the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce on

cloudy week was the first good omen for the event, which attracted 60 attendees from about 20 local businesses to the patio and family lounge.

the Department of Motor Vehicles. Everyone seemed to be impressed by what they saw.

"They loved it," Maggie said. "A lot of

June 8, truly showed the community what a gem it has with the facility being here.



"It's the first time we held it on site," said admissions director Maggie Guizar.

The inspiration to host the event was partly out of a realization that the facility needed greater reach in the area.

"A lot of people don't know that we're here," she said. "We want to increase community awareness."

A literal ray of sunshine in and otherwise

people asked to take a tour of the facility." Now they have been asked for an encore.

"They're asking if we're going to do this every year," Maggie said. "I don't see why not."

FEATURED PHYSICIAN:

Dr. Inna Yaskin

After a few months working with Sunnyvale Health Care Center, Dr. Inna Yaskin appears to have found her groove with the staff and residents.



"I think I work well with them," she says. "The communication is great among the nurses. Anytime I call the floor, even if it's a change of shift, they know well what the residents' needs are."

"They're very attuned to new medical problems. They always call me when there's a change in status."

Dr. Yaskin, a graduate of Cornell University and the Touro University College of Osteopathic Medicine, runs a practice in Mountain View and is board-certified in inter-

nal and geriatric medicine. She has extensive experience working nursing homes and says the caliber of the nurses is the "number one" factor in a facility's success.

"We're not there 24 hours," she says, referring to site physicians. "We need them to be our eyes and ears and alarm us to any change."

She also recognizes that Sunnyvale's family-oriented philosophy toward patient care is an asset to build on.

"The atmosphere is real friendly and the patients' needs are really well met," she says. "That personalized approach is really important. You can feel it. It translates to every aspect of running a nursing home."

The industries represented included health-care suppliers, advertising agencies, physician clinics and even



FEATURED RESIDENT: Mari Williams

Midwesterner praises new home away from home

After more than a year at Sunnyvale Health Care Center, Mari Williams never ceases to be impressed by her digs.

"They'll do anything in the world to help you," Mari says. "You have a lot of confidence in them."

Before coming to the facility, Mari was helping her only son raise her only grandchildren, now college-age girls. She takes pride in their success, which was her goal when she decided to move from Quincy, Illi-



nois, to Cupertino.

Quincy is where she was born and raised, and where she spent most of her life before heading west.

"It's a small town but a great place to live," she says. "My family has been there for five generations. There's camara-

derie, a closeness of everyone."

And the crisp, sunny California weather doesn't even make it in the plus column when she compares the two locales.

"The weather, crazy as it is, I miss," Mari says. "It's cold, up and down.

But it's what you grew up with."

Mari says she remains close to her two sisters, also in their 70s, so much so that on a recent phone call home, she and one sister realized they had the same song stuck in their heads.

"We're still connected," she says.

Mari makes the most of her new home and couldn't run out of compliments to give the facility.

"This place is spotless," she says. "I've never seen such a place."

She rattled off more things she likes, such as laundry services and the family-oriented approach of the staff. And there are the meals.

"Everything they cook is good, I eat it all," she says.

Additionally, even the difficulties of needing assisted care are made easier at Sunnyvale, she says.

"Therapy is fabulous," she says. "There exercises that you don't want to do, but they make it fun. People come here in really bad shape, and they get them all up and walking."

Mari said she wouldn't hesitate recommending the facility to anyone looking around for its services.

"If you have to have assisted care, this is the place to be. In some ways, it's better than home."

HEALTH CORNER: Understanding C-Diff

With the increasingly intense summer heat, facilities like Sunnyvale Health Care Center have to keep dehydration risks in focus to ensure its residents' health. But dehydration comes by way of more than temperatures. Among them is *Clostridium difficile*, or C-Diff, a bacteria that is popping up more frequently than it has in recent memory.

"You tie it into summer and dehydration is a bigger deal," said Executive Director Vanessa Chavez. "And a lot of people are coming down with gastrointestinal issues."

The clinical symptoms for C-Diff are fever, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal pain and tenderness, and with respect to dehydration risk, watery diarrhea. It's spread through contact, which

makes preventing its spread one of the chief tasks of the Sunnyvale staff.

A facility like Sunnyvale is susceptible to its presence because according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, those at increased risk for infection are those with long stays in healthcare settings, immunocompromising conditions and advanced

age. Treatment usually consists of a cycle of antibiotics.

But fear not, because the facility staff adheres to rigorous cleanliness and infection control standards. It turns out the most effective prevention method is tried and true: good old-fashioned handwashing.

"That's the best defense," Vanessa says. "Most people don't prac-

tice safe handwashing."

Safe handwashing is characterized by 15 to 20 seconds of vigorous scrubbing and taking care to wash under fingernails. Using an antibacterial gel, which has become popular, doesn't count.

"It's not a substitute for handwashing," Vanessa says. "You've got to wash your hands."

REHAB CORNER: Arthritis

A chronic issue that residents at skilled-nursing facilities face is arthritis, so widespread that it affects 21 million adults, making it the most common disability in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



older.

The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis, marked by inflammation around joints caused by a lifetime of movement that can wear away cartilage.

There are no readily available cures for osteoarthritis beyond joint surgery, but there are plenty of measures that

can be taken to lessen the pain it causes and to keep it from worsening.

The CDC encourages physical activity as a way of managing the effects of arthritis, saying it decreases pain, improves function and delays disability. That means moderate physical activity for 30 minutes a day five days a week, in 10-minute intervals.

Along those lines, maintaining a healthy

weight is important in decreasing the progression of the disease, especially when you consider the stress it takes off your joints.

There are a variety of pain-relieving medications that can help those afflicted get through the strain caused by inflammation, and keeping tabs with your doctor are key in ensuring that you're giving yourself optimal treatment.

Occupational therapy also teaches techniques that can alleviate pain on joints by distributing pressure to minimize any one area from bearing too much weight.

Susan Elias, director of rehabilitation, recommends visiting the website for North Coast Medical, based in Morgan Hill, for information about devices that help people live with arthritis: www.ncmedical.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Summer 2011

JULY

5: Fourth of July BBQ

8: Happy Hour—2

9: p.m.

Pet Therapy with

Goldie

9-10: SHCC is part of Los

Altos Wine Festival

14: Resident Council

15: July birthday party

19: Beach party

Pet Therapy with

21: Young at Heart

23: Pet Therapy with

Goldie

28: Candlelight dinner

with Bill Martin

Sunnyvale Cham-

ber of Commerce

Mixer

AUGUST

6: Pet Therapy with

11: Goldie

Resident Council

12: Pet Therapy with

Happy Hour—2

p.m.

16: Beach party

19: August birthday

party

20: Pet Therapy with

Goldie

24: SHCC annual Luncheon

25: Candlelight dinner

with Bill Martin

3: Pet Therapy with

SEPTEMBER

Goldie

8: Resident Council

9: Happy Hour—2

p.m.

16: September birth-

day party

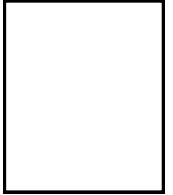
17: Pet Therapy with

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25: Young at Heart

29: Candlelight dinner

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“Family Caring for Families”