

# Aging Issues

A publication for New Hampshire's older citizens

## Quality of Life Awards Presented

Four New Hampshire nursing homes are being honored at the third annual Quality of Life Event scheduled for September 29th at the Radisson Hotel in Manchester. The four nursing homes are being recognized by the Quality of Life Council for their efforts to create a homelike environment centered on the lifestyles and preferences of their residents.

Last year's QOL event was a sellout, with 40 nursing homes represented, including residents and administrative staff, and this year's event is expected to be the same. In his opening remarks at the 2008 QOL event, NH Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas said that this was "a very, very gratifying opportunity to participate in this celebration with the nursing home community. The citizens of New Hampshire should all recognize and focus on the quality of care that you provide for our seniors...it is so important that they get the dignity and respect [that is provided by New Hampshire nursing homes] in the last months and years of their lives."

The year's four winners are: Glencliff Home for the Elderly (Glencliff), the Peabody Home (Franklin), Hanover Hill Healthcare Center (Manchester); and **The Edgewood Centre** (Portsmouth). **Edgewood Centre** was honored in both 2007 and 2008 for their work with residents and the other three are new winners. "This is what makes the Quality of Life awards especially exciting," said Don Rabun, Long-Term Care Ombudsman. "This shows that a groundswell is taking place here in New Hampshire as we keep building momentum to make long-term care more responsive to the needs and preferences of residents."

Culture change in nursing homes can include many things, ranging from making the décor more attractive and providing a more varied menu, to creating a more flexible routine which allows residents to decide when to get up and what time to eat, expanding the range of activities and/or empowering residents to become more involved in the community.

The Quality of Life Council was created in 2006 by the State Committee on Aging and John Stephen, who was then Commissioner of the NH DHHS. The Quality of Life Awards Council is composed of representatives from nursing homes, the State Committee on Aging, the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, the DHHS, and other community stakeholders.

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), New Hampshire nursing homes are not only above the national average, but they also lead the nation in deficiency-free surveys conducted by CMS in 2004 and 2006. "While this is an extraordinary achievement, New Hampshire's Quality of Life award process enables the nursing homes to be recognized not only for the quality of care, but also for the quality of life experienced by the

residents,” said Don Rabun.

Each nursing home applying to be considered for a Quality of Life Award must first submit a self- assessment and a description of the facility’s recent changes and achievements. A team from the QOL Council reviews the information from each applicant (the name of the facility is removed from the material to ensure objectivity during the review process) and selects the homes that warrant further consideration. A “travel team” composed of four different individuals selected by the Council then visits the finalists, tours the nursing homes, and talks with residents, staff and family members before the winners are selected.

A booklet containing the various quality of life endeavors initiated by the nursing homes that applied this year will be made available to those who attend the Quality of Life event on September 29. “We hope that these good practices can be implemented in nursing homes across the State,” said Don Rabun. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of this booklet can do so by contacting the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO) at 271-4375 or e-mailing [oltco@dhhs.state.nh.us](mailto:oltco@dhhs.state.nh.us).

Aging Issues is published by the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS) and the NH State Committee on Aging (SCOA).