Dementia Training

Individuals with Alzheimer’s disease have medical, psychological and social care needs that often make care delivery challenging and more demanding.

- Most individuals with Alzheimer’s have at least one other chronic condition (such as diabetes or heart disease), and cognitive impairment often complicates the management and treatment of those other conditions.

- Over time, people with Alzheimer’s and other dementias will lose the ability to use words and may communicate their needs through their behavior.

- Sometimes, the behaviors exhibited by individuals with the disease may be hurtful to themselves and others – and can be both frustrating and frightening to health care workers.

Most health care workers are ill-equipped and ill-informed to deal with the unique needs of those with Alzheimer’s disease.

- Direct-care workers receive, on average, 75 hours of training. But one review found that it included very little focus on issues specific or pertinent to dementia care.

- While reviews have shown that staff training programs to improve the quality of dementia care in nursing homes have positive benefits, these staff are unlikely to receive adequate dementia training.

To best serve people with Alzheimer’s, all individuals employed in the delivery of care across the care continuum should be properly trained in dementia care.

- Dementia training must ensure that individuals have the ability to:
  - understand, interact with and monitor those with dementia;
  - help individuals with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers live with the disease;
  - recognize health-related problems;
  - respond appropriately to common behaviors associated with the disease; and
  - provide responsive care, including social, behavioral and emotional support.

- Training should utilize a model that ensures individuals achieve and demonstrate competency, not just complete a set number of course hours.