There are many concerns about the quality of nursing homes despite legislative-required regulations, quality improvement projects implemented by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, coalitions of providers (e.g., Advancing Excellence Campaign), and organization initiatives. The Advancing Excellence Campaign (access http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org) is a collaboration of stakeholders and is aimed at making nursing homes better places to live, work, and visit by providing free, practical, and accessible quality improvement initiatives.

Nursing homes decry emphasis on the negatives of their facilities and the little recognition of the positives. Turnover of nurses, certified nursing assistants, and administrative staff make provision of quality of care and innovation in care extremely difficult (Castle, 2001; Maas, Specht, Buckwalter, Gittler, & Bechen, 2008). It has been especially hard to recruit bachelor-prepared nurses to nursing homes, adding to the difficulty of having nurses adequately prepared to care for older individuals with complex needs in addition to managing a large staff of minimally prepared workers. Most believe that nursing home staff want to provide good care but often lack the resources of knowledge or time to do so.

There has been increasing evidence of the importance of environments for both provision of quality care to older adults and optimal staff performance and retention. As such, it is essential to pay more attention to the nursing home environment (Lyons, Specht, Karlman, & Maas, 2008).

The Pathway to Excellence in Long Term Care® (PTE-LTC) Program, administered by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, aims to identify and recognize long-term care (LTC) agencies that have created excellent environments for nurses and nursing staff, in which nurses excel and quality of care is emphasized. The PTE-LTC Program differs from the Advancing Excellence Campaign in that the Pathway initiative emphasizes the environment for practice and recognizes organizations that have attained supportive work environments.

The program started 3 years ago, and currently four LTC organiza-
tions are designated as PTE organizations. Quality is increasingly important to the viability of LTC organizations. Studies have shown that a positive practice environment for nurses helps organizations improve (a) quality of care, (b) patient safety and satisfaction, and (c) nurse and nursing staff satisfaction and retention.

The PTE-LTC Program provides: (a) a vehicle for nation-wide recognition of a healthy work environment; and (b) a framework for meeting standards that will help develop the healthy environment for nurses and nursing staff and residents to thrive. Nurses, nursing staff, and families can look for the Pathway Designation and be assured of a healthy living and work environment. Access the website (http://www.pathwaytoexcellence.com) for more information.

**Nursing homes decry emphasis on the negatives of their facilities and the little recognition of the positives.**

**REFERENCES**


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*The author has disclosed no potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise.*

doi:10.3928/00989134-20150203-01