

Oklahoma nursing homes

New help... new hope

LARRY WHITE

“QUALITY OF LIFE” HAS LONG BEEN A PHRASE that defines Oklahomans. We who live in the heartland of the nation often count our blessings as we get to experience a lifestyle far from the crowded conditions and exorbitant costs of living in America’s coastal regions.

But all Oklahomans haven’t shared that “quality.” Many of our aged and aging have seemingly outlived such quality. We live in a time when medicine and technology has made great strides in extending the quantity of our years. Not many generations ago persons reaching

their septuagenarian years were quite the exception. Now, the 70s have become today’s retirement decade with the expectation of many years to follow.

So it just seems right that fellow Oklahoma residents would stand up and fight for the extension of that quality to the elderly of our state.

The nursing home industry in the state has experienced a challenging past. But new information regarding the resurgence of quality standards has brightened the future for current and potential residents.

Bob Lane is the Nursing Home and

Home Health Project Manager for the Oklahoma Foundation for Medical Quality. He heads up the quality initiatives working with nursing homes and home health agencies. OFMQ partners with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and together they have established a quality improvement program for the state’s nursing homes. In the past three years, according to Lane, Oklahoma nursing homes have ranked fifth in the nation for improving nursing home conditions. And he calls that a significant accomplishment.

The OFMQ works hand in hand with



state nursing home providers with improvements in clinical areas (decreasing typical nursing home resident maladies), as well as in organizational areas (keeping residents happy and retaining good employees). The group's goal has been to bring about a cultural change moving nursing homes from a stark institutional, impersonal structure to a caring, home setting.

Oklahoma governor Brad Henry is also concerned about nursing home improvements in the state. He recently overhauled the state's Nursing Home Board replacing 13 members of the

14-member board that oversees nursing home administrators.

Terry Clark, the Administrator of Assisted Living for Tulsa's University Village, is one

of four Tulsans that the governor appointed. One of the positive issues the board is considering is raising the educational standards required of nursing home administrators.

"Raising the educational requirements will directly relate to better resident care," assured Clark. "The purpose of this board is to ensure that we have good administrators in this state."

"The administrators, the employees, the state and the federal organizations have all taken ownership in bringing up the quality of the culture of nursing home care in our state," added Lane. "We've seen significant improvement already and we're very committed to the ongoing improvement of our facilities in the future."

Although you might not think of it as a pep rally, there are many people who are rallying together to provide individuals living in the Sooner state in their later years an Oklahoma-quality experience. ■

Oklahoma nursing home facts

According to a recent study of nursing homes in the United States compiled by the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of California – San Francisco:

- There are over 21,000 residents living in 359 certified nursing facilities in Oklahoma.
- The occupancy rate of nursing homes in Oklahoma is at 66.8 percent, about 20 percent under the national rate.
- Slightly over 4.5 percent of Oklahomans at the age of 65 and older are nursing home residents.
- While the majority of state nursing homes (83 percent) are categorized as for-profit organizations, 12 percent are listed as non-profit establishments. Government owned units make up the remaining five percent.

ATTENTION: People with Medicare

Why have a separate prescription drug plan?



It's so simple! Get all your Medicare coverage and prescription drugs under one plan with Humana's Medicare Health Plan.

Now there's a Medicare health plan, Humana Gold Choice[®], that gives you all your Original Medicare benefits, plus prescription drug coverage and much more...

With Humana Gold Choice there's no need for a separate prescription drug plan!

Benefits* include:

- **Freedom** to choose any doctor, specialist or hospital**
- **Prescription drug coverage at no extra plan premium**
 - Plan covers 100% of the most popular prescription drugs[†]
 - Benefits greater than or equal to Medicare requirements
- **Low** monthly plan premium
- Primary care doctor office visits for just \$15
- Preventive services
- And **MORE...**

Let's Talk.

Don't wait! Call today to attend one of our free seminars and find out more.

For information, reservations or for accommodation of persons with special needs at sales meetings, call

1-800-336-6716 • TDD: 1-877-833-4486

Monday – Friday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Saturday 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET.

HUMANA.
Guidance when you need it most

An Insurance Company with a Medicare Advantage contract to offer a Private Fee-for-Service plan available to anyone enrolled in Part B and entitled to Part A of Medicare through age or disability who continues to pay Medicare applicable premiums. *Limitations and copayments apply. Benefits and premiums vary by county. **As with any insurance, providers must accept Humana's payment terms and conditions. †Top 100 drugs by number of prescriptions from Medicare drug card experience. A sales representative will be present with information and applications.

GH 18637aPFFS Low

OK 01/06