

# New Dementia Care Certificate

Staff

**C**aring for persons with dementia is difficult and often overwhelming, yet the need for personal and professional caregivers

is growing as the population ages and the incidence of dementia increases.

To help caregivers, Penny Shaffer, RN, program director, Health and Human Services, whose specialty is geriatric care, applied for and received a \$25,000 grant to fund a new advanced dementia care certificate program. The grant was awarded in August 2008 from the International Longevity Center under the 2008 Community College Caregiver Training Initiative funded by MetLife Foundation.

The result is a new 30-hour dementia care certificate program, developed in collaboration with the Heartland Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, that will train family caregivers and in-home care workers to provide long-term home care services to older adults with cognitive deficits due to Alzheimer's disease, dementia or stroke. The first session will be 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Feb. 18, 19, 20, 25 and 26 in room 181 of the Regnier Center. A second session will be March 24, 25, 26, April 1 and 2 in room 181 of the Regnier Center. The five-day course will be offered six times between February and December.

Courses will be free to family and nonprofessional caregivers. For professionals, the cost is \$360. RNs, LPNs, counselors and social workers will earn 30 contact hours. CNAs, home health aides, and personal caregivers will receive a certificate of completion. Professionals can register by calling workforce, community and economic development to register at 913-469-2323.

"This program will be the first of its kind in Kansas," Shaffer said. "It is our hope to expand it beyond the metropolitan area in the future."

Training will emphasize holistic, person-centered care and the importance of the family unit in the patient's care. This course will cover the most common types of dementia and focus on activities for cognitive and physical stimulation, practical care for assisting in daily-life activities, management of difficult behavioral issues and activities that promote quality of life. Topics include the neurological progression of Alzheimer's disease and the psycho/social impacts of functional decline, including depression and delirium.

The stress and mental health of the caregiver also will be discussed, including signs and symptoms of depression and stress in the caregiver and the stages of grief and loss. Practical information on how to choose a quality nursing home if home-care is no longer an option will be provided.

"Knowledge is power," Shaffer said. "This program is designed to equip caregivers with practical information and balance that care with their own needs and health." 



Penny Shaffer, RN, program director, Health and Human Services, developed a new dementia care certificate for professionals and family members.

