



Center for Medical Home Improvement

For release January 15, 2010

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Life Long Care recognized for excellence

Life Long Care of New London recently scored 92 out of a possible 100 points on a rigorous quality assessment of its performance as a Patient Centered Medical Home. This score is the equivalent of the National Committee for Quality Assurance's (NCQA) highest, or Level 3, recognition.

According to CMHI (www.medicalhomeimprovement.org) a Concord, NH based medical home transformation, education, research and policy organization - a "medical home" is a community-based primary care setting that provides and coordinates high quality, planned, family-centered health promotion, acute illness care, and chronic condition management — across the lifespan. CMHI is a programmatic center of excellence within the Crotched Mountain Foundation, Greenfield, NH. Life Long Care is an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse-owned family practice that is committed to providing high quality health care, based on nationally accepted best practice standards, to patients of all ages. It is one of nine health care organizations participating in the Citizen's Health Initiative's NH Medical Home Pilot Project (www.steppingupnh.org).

"When I opened my practice in 2003, I wanted to provide an office where patients felt comfortable, safe and at home, and where staff could experience a healthy work place and a sense of shared ownership," said Life Long Care's Kitty Kidder, APRN. "I also wanted to demonstrate that a nurse practitioner primary care practice could achieve high patient satisfaction, with outcomes comparable to our physician colleagues."

From the waiting room atmosphere, the flannel gowns designed to accommodate patients of all sizes and shapes, to taking the time to make sure the providers and staff are really listening to their patients, Life Long Care (www.lifelongcare.net) strives to provide superior health care to patients of all ages.

"Every visit is important to us, whether for a routine physical or even a tummy ache, we want each patient to receive the care he or she deserves. Our practice is designed to be a safe place, committed to maintaining best practices on behalf of our patients," said Kidder.

“The patient-centered medical home model calls for a personal ‘physician’ directed medical practice, whole person orientation and integrated safe quality care with enhanced access. It turns out, that is also what nurse practitioners and our practice are all about!” she said.

In a patient and family-centered medical home, health care is coordinated to ensure that patients get care when and where they need and want it. The medical home approach values and encourages treatment of the whole patient. It emphasizes the use of care coordination and health information technology, including electronic health records, to help prevent and manage chronic conditions. It also features consumer conveniences such as same-day scheduling and secure e-mail communications.

To organize all medical home efforts and submit an application, Life Long Care utilized one of CMHI’s consultation options – the Medical Home TAPPP™ (Gap) Analysis which provides a practice assessment and includes measurement and transformation guidance. TAPPP™ has been created with support from the NH Endowment for Health and stands for team, access, population, planned/coordinated care, and patient and family-centered care.

“Life Long Care strives to be an excellent medical home for all of its patients. This achievement and recognition is a beginning, not an end, to their organization, improvement and provision of excellent patient and family-centered care,” said Jeannie McAllister, director of the Center for Medical Home Improvement. “The NCQA application process requires an extraordinary amount of effort; smaller practices such as Life Long Care hold somewhat of a disadvantage since they do not have the administrative support of a large primary care network. Life Long Care met this challenge head on.”

“From the Medical Home Pilot Project’s outset we hoped to be able to involve a Nurse Practitioner-led practice, to demonstrate patient-centered high quality, high efficiency care in a smaller setting,” said Heather Staples, staff consultant with the NH Citizens Health Initiative. “Life Long Care has proven that smaller practices can achieve the highest quality results, and can transform into a model of primary care that all practices can, and should, emulate.”

Lisah Carpenter, Executive Director of the NH Nurse Practitioner Association said, “Life Long Care is the first nurse practitioner owned primary care practice in the Northeast to achieve this recognition from NCQA, once again demonstrating that nurse practitioners are capable of providing the highest quality health care. In a time of deepening shortages in primary care, Life Long Care is just one example of how nurse practitioners can be a part of the solution.”

“I am very proud of the staff and what we have accomplished here at Life Long Care,” said Kitty Kidder. “I also know that we are not alone and that many, many practices provide excellent high quality health care.”

For more information on the medical home and practice transformation contact CMHI, Crotched Mountain Foundation (www.medicalhomeimprovement.org).

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