



Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders

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**ANNUAL NICHE CONFERENCE EXPLORES INTERDISCIPLINARY PATHS TO
IMPROVED GERIATRIC CARE**

**EXPERTS FOCUS ON THE ROLE OF COLLABORATION IN IMPROVING OUTCOMES
FOR GERIATRIC PATIENTS**

Baltimore, MD - May 3, 2010 - More than 400 nurses and other health professionals from the U.S. and Canada attended the thirteenth annual conference of NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders), held April 21 to 23 in Baltimore, Maryland. The theme of the conference was "Collaborate! Interdisciplinary Paths to Improved Geriatric Care."

Despite the current economic conditions, conference attendance exceeded expectations by 31%, reflecting an increased awareness of the need to improve the outcomes and experience of hospitalization for older adults. Speakers from a variety of disciplines, including administration, medicine, nursing, physical therapy, and social work presented innovations for quality improvement.

The NICHE program has been adopted by more than 300 hospitals in North America, which seek to develop, implement, and sustain system-wide improvement in care for older adult patients. Eighteen new hospitals joined NICHE at this year's conference. Conference attendees included nurse administrators, nurse executives, nurse educators, geriatric advanced practice nurses, geriatricians, registered nurses, and geriatric team members including pharmacists, rehabilitation therapists, and social workers.

"This year's conference focused on the role that collaboration plays in the quality of care for older adults," says Elizabeth

A. Capezuti, PhD, RN, FAAN, NICHE faculty director and Co-director of the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing. "We heard from clinicians, administrators, and researchers who presented important evidence-based, interdisciplinary approaches to promote positive outcomes and experiences for the hospitalized older adult."

In all, 26 sessions were presented by a variety of experts and faculty from NICHE hospitals. The panel presentations from NICHE programs addressed dementia, delirium, and function promotion in hospitalized older adults, among other topics. Strategies of the NICHE program, widely discussed during the conference, include development of organizational and clinical resources, developing models for outcome measurement and advancing research in evidence-based geriatric best practices.

Pre-conference events – unique to this year's conference – started with the Gerontological Nursing Review Course and the NICHE Journey to Excellence Symposium. Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean of the NYU College of Nursing, followed with a keynote presentation on "Continuing the Path to Excellence." The new NICHE hospital induction ceremony, a Meridian Health System panel presentation and a "kick-off" reception/poster session filled out the pre-conference day events.

Barbara Resnick, PhD, CRNP, FAAN, FAANP, professor in the Department of Organizational Systems and Adult Health at the University of Maryland School of Nursing, and Katie Maslow, MSW, director for Policy Development at the Alzheimer's Association, were the other keynote speakers. Resnick presented "NICHE Nurses Starting the Process: Optimizing Function in Acute Care." Maslow's presentation was "Hospital Patients with Dementia: Numbers, Adverse Health Events, and Emerging Best Practices."

About NICHE

NICHE is a national organization designed to help healthcare professionals in hospitals improve the care of older adults. NICHE hospitals seek to create an environment where older adult patients receive care that results in better outcomes. This climate of success encourages patients and their families to seek NICHE designated hospitals for their medical needs. The

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Photo Caption: Liz Capezuti, PhD, RN, FAAN
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