

Gerryatric Musings

December 2013

At the last Annual Leadership Program for Physicians in Long Term Care this past weekend, the BC Ombudsperson presented information on the review of the care of seniors in the province.

One highlight was the observation that we continue to operate with inadequate or outdated information. I think this reinforces the problems we continue to face with poor communication.

My observation in our facilities is the lack of documentation particularly medical. I find the main source of information regarding a resident's medical problems is from the assessment done by the long-term care assessor. There may be a copy of an admission note from a hospital but there is rarely a summary from the physician. This makes it difficult for another physician to treat or assess the resident in the facility or the emergency department.

Our facilities are encouraged to accept residents with minimal and inadequate information about a potential client. Frequently this result in an inability to supply the care needs of the resident and taxes the resources of that facility. Part of the problem is that we do not have good standards for the care of our residents. It was a revelation that standard for childcare are strict but we do not see the same for our seniors. We know that each has individual has very specific needs.

Getting back to communication, my observation over the years is that conflicts and misadventures are frequently related to an absence or poor communication. I encourage you all to take the time to complete the admission forms that are sent to you and communicate carefully and clearly to the staff.

References:

Best of Care Report (Parts 1 and 2), Office of the BC Ombudsperson.
Available online at, www.ombudman.bc.ca/seniors