

First Care Home Health rates among the best in state

By Staff reports

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Fosston, Minn. -

The Council of State Home Care Associations recently notified First Care Medical Services Home Health in Fosston of their 99% rating when compared to other home health agencies statewide in patient improvements at home. There are 12 areas that are measured, including such things as walking, breathing, less return hospital admissions, taking medication and wound care. The 99% rating means First Care is among the top 1% of all home health agencies in Minnesota. When compared to other home health agencies nationwide First Care rated a 91%. The 91% rating means First Care is among the top 9% of all home health agencies in the United States.

Founded in 1984, First Care's Home Health employs 16 full and part-time staff members. They provided care for more than 450 patients in the comfort of their own home in 2008. They made 11,000 visits and traveled more than 114,000 miles. Volunteers for Home Health and Hospice enhance patient care.

Jodi Nelson, Director of Nursing at First Care Home Health & Hospice, commented on the commitment her staff has made to patients. "First Care's staff is committed to patient independence and providing the best possible services to the people we assist. The staff has continued to build on the progress we've made in previous years, ascending from 84% patient improvements at home in 2008 to 91% in 2009.

"Our patient education is tailored to each patient's home and their abilities to perform specific tasks," explained Nelson. Each patient has individual challenges, and we have provided tools and equipment to help them better care for themselves. As they adopt the routines and learn to use new tools and equipment, their health continually improves. Our goal and measure of success is to prepare them to adapt to their situation and to continue being independent.

"Our staff considers it a privilege to assist people who choose to stay in their own homes. I am very often impressed at the random acts of kindness that are extended by our team members who routinely go the extra mile to make a difference for patients," commented Nelson. "The 171 volunteer staff hours say a lot about staff dedication and commitment."

November is National Home Care Month. The theme for Home Care Month 2009 is "Help Us Choose Home." Nine out of ten people prefer home care to institutional care. Home care combines efficiency and compassion with the latest

in health-care technology. Home care makes independence possible for seniors and those living with chronic health conditions, while keeping families together.

A recent study shows that the expense of providing early post-acute home care to individuals suffering from diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or coronary heart failure was much lower than the expense of providing post-acute care to these same patients in non-home-based settings, for a total Medicare savings of \$1.77 billion in 2005-2006.

A large number of senior citizens are entering the age of home health needs, and there has never been a greater need for home services than the present.

“Without the services provided by our nurse, home health aide, and therapy staff, many patients – especially those suffering from chronic illnesses would more frequently require hospital services,” said Nelson. “Other patients would have to enter a nursing home prematurely. Still others would have to stay in the hospital or rehabilitation facility longer following an inpatient procedure, or else they would need to be readmitted to the hospital in the event that a condition worsened due to the absence of recuperative post-acute home care services.”

Patricia Wangler, CEO at First Care Medical Services, commended Nelson and the entire Home Health staff. “We are very proud of the results this study demonstrates about the staff dedication and commitment to providing the very best possible services for our clients. In addition to this report, surveys from patients rate the First Care staff in the 95th percentile in overall satisfaction. Our Home Health staff treat each client as an individual, and it shows.”

For more information about home health services, contact Jodi Nelson at 218 435-7670. First Care Medical Services is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Visit our website at www.firstcare.org.