United Zion’s Successful Falls Prevention Program

Founded in 1905 as the United Zion Home for the Homeless, United Zion is a non-profit, faith-based retirement community offering a continuum of care including independent living apartments and cottages, personal care, skilled nursing and rehabilitation. United Zion currently serves approximately 150 individuals on a peaceful, landscaped campus overlooking the historic town of Lititz and the surrounding Lancaster County countryside.

For the last two years, United Zion residents have had significantly fewer falls with injuries than the statewide average according to the falls with injury quality measure of the Medicare Nursing Home Compare. While the statewide average for the measure is consistently greater than 3 percent each quarter, United Zion has been successful in maintaining a percentage of less than 1 percent.

United Zion credits their success in this area to their person-centered model of care. Everyone on staff plays a part in monitoring the risk of falls within the facility. The activity department staff begins by completing an intensive biography based on the resident’s medical history that assigns a numerical value to each resident’s potential for falls. This report is discussed in great detail at a weekly falls prevention meeting as well as each day at the morning clinical meeting. When warranted, a resident is placed on purposeful rounding where he or she could be monitored as frequently as every hour in order to anticipate and address the needs of the resident. A recent study by American Sentinel University found that purposeful rounding could decrease falls by as much as 54 percent.

United Zion also believes that much of their success is due to their staff. Staff members show respect to residents and to each other as a team, working together towards common goals to provide the utmost care while maintaining a strong commitment to safety and quality service. Staff member satisfaction is very important in the community’s ability to provide excellent care for their residents. Management believes that when employees are happy with their schedule and have the flexibility they need, such as four- or five-day work week or 12-hour shifts over the weekend, the employees are happy and it is reflected in patient care.

Thank you to United Zion, Michael Shaw, BSN, RNC, and LaDonna Burns for sharing their story. For more information on the community please visit www.uzrc.org. If you have questions on this article or would like to submit a suggestion for a Strategy Spotlight case study, please contact Brandie Karpew at brandie@leadingagepa.org.