

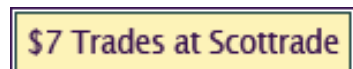
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Press Release

Source: Alzheimer's Foundation of America

New Organization Formed for Dementia Care Professionals

Tuesday October 12, 1:55 pm ET

NEW YORK, Oct. 12 /PRNewswire/ -- The Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) today unveiled a groundbreaking new division for healthcare professionals that provides training, qualification and membership benefits to those who care for individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementias.

ADVERTISEMENT Called Dementia Care Professionals of America (DCPA), the division is believed to be the first of its kind specifically tailored to all levels of dementia care professionals. DCPA enables them to undergo a practical DVD- format training program aimed at understanding dementia, and providing safe and effective care to individuals affected by it. Successful completion of the program leads to AFA-sanctioned qualification.

DCPA mirrors AFA's mission "to provide optimal care to individuals with dementia, and their caregivers and families." AFA, a nonprofit national organization founded in 2002, represents member organizations from coast to coast that provide education and hands-on support services. Similarly, DCPA aims to bring together healthcare professionals in the dementia field.

"We created DCPA to join healthcare professionals with a common purpose -- to raise the standard of excellence in dementia care. Our goal is to change the face of care in America. Educating professionals is essential in order to accomplish that," said Eric J. Hall, AFA's chief executive officer.

Hall said DCPA is especially timely given the increasing incidence of Alzheimer's disease, a progressive brain disorder that produces memory loss and a decline in other intellectual functions; it is expected to triple to 16 million in the U.S. by mid-century. "It is critical to provide training to professionals currently in the field as well as to the next generation as we cope with this epidemic," he said.

DCPA's training materials and qualification standards are based on current research, and the most effective practice protocols and widely accepted knowledge in the field. AFA has thoroughly reviewed and sanctioned these standards. Professionals will be qualified as AFA Qualified Dementia Care Providers or AFA Qualified Dementia Care Specialists, depending on the level of education they achieve.

The training consists of a beginning and more advanced series of DVDs, and accompanying CD-ROMs that include fact sheets and qualification tests. Series 1 is designed to educate healthcare providers, including entry level employees, about dementia, principles of basic care, and practical

tips on managing complex behaviors and activities of daily living. The second series provides more advanced information about cognitive and psychiatric symptoms, and behavioral challenges associated with various dementias.

The program was developed by Richard E. Powers, M.D., an AFA board member and chief of the Bureau of Geriatric Psychiatry at the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

Powers said the training takes a practical and user-friendly approach. "The series covers essential issues on caregiving and behavioral management in a direct, uncomplicated manner. The clinical vignettes allow the professional to see the world through the eyes of someone with dementia," he said.

DCPA has already contracted with several national organizations to train their employees, including Visiting Angels, a senior homecare franchise. Professionals can also sign up individually for the training and qualification whether or not they become members of DCPA.

Those who choose to become DCPA members will reap networking and advocacy opportunities, professional discounts and other benefits. Membership is open to all levels of professionals, ranging from personal care aides to physicians.

In addition to training, DCPA's goal is to increase recognition and public acceptance of those working with dementia clients. "All too often these dedicated professionals are not given credit for the value they offer families. Through DCPA, we hope to empower them, and raise their level of respect in the public's view and their own self-respect," Hall said.

For more information, call AFA at (toll-free) 866-AFA-8484 or visit <http://www.careprofessionals.org>.

Source: Alzheimer's Foundation of America

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