

Top DON Awards

Sandra Varnadoe, the director of nursing at Life Care Center of Orange Park in Florida, Monday evening was named winner of the Mary Denton Award, the highest honor the company bestows on a nurse. The next-highest award, the title of Company-Wide Director of Nursing of the Year, went to Tricia Richardson of Life Care Center of Treasure Valley in Idaho.

A special presentation, the Exceptional Achievement Award, was bestowed on JoAnn Campbell, director of nursing at Life Care Center of Nashoba Valley. Since she has been involved in a leadership role -- first as assistant director of nursing and then as the director -- Life Care Center of Nashoba Valley has received a deficiency-free survey ranking for eight of nine years.

Varnadoe began her career at Life Care Center of Orange Park seven years ago, shortly after the building opened. Then a licensed practical nurse, she joined the team as human resources director and helped fashion a strong organization of management and staff. While managing the subacute unit and house in the evenings and weekends, she entered into an extremely rigorous study program to earn her registered nurse degree.

Named the director of nursing two years ago, Varnadoe extricated agency usage from the center, solidified the staffing and created a family-like atmosphere. Turnover in the department has decreased tremendously. She oversaw the reorganization of the Performance Improvement and Quality Indicators reporting. Life Care Center of Orange Park is the proud recipient of American Health Care Association's Step I Quality Award, and Varnadoe was very instrumental in assembling data and putting together the award nomination.

Division Directors of Nursing of the Year named Monday evening are: Diana McCrorey, Life Care Center of Columbia, South Carolina, Eastern Division; Joanna Ritchey, Garden Terrace in Fort Worth, Texas, Garden Terrace Associates; Donna Grimes, Carrollton Nursing Center, Missouri, Heartland Division; April Blea, Heritage Park Care Center, Colorado, Mountain States Division; Pat Woolum, Rivergate Terrace, Michigan, Northeast Division; Jodi Stewart, Cascade Park Care Center, Washington, Northwest Division; and Daniel Navarro, Life Care Center of Las Vegas, Nevada, Southwest Division.

Awards for deficiency-free surveys in nursing went to Patsy Slater, Camellia Gardens of Life Care, Georgia; Jodi Stewart, Cascade Park Care Center, Washington; Rosalee Gibbs, Garden Terrace of Salt Lake City, Utah; Cynthia Stevens, The Lane House, Indiana; Debbie Kutch, Life Care Center of Haltom, Texas; JoAnn Campbell, Life Care Center of Nashoba Valley, Massachusetts; Stacey Demps, Life Care Center of Sparta, Tennessee; Terry Jonas, Parkview Care Center, Indiana; Marta Torres, San Luis Care Center, Colorado; and Lou Kass, The Gardens Court, Florida.

Congratulations to all these winners.

--Beecher Hunter