



gerontology
A. Jolayne Farrell

New trends surfacing in nursing home care

Last month I presented workshops to staff working in nursing homes in both Michigan and Ontario. During the workshops a lot of exchange of ideas about new trends in nursing homes took place.

Some interesting changes are being made, and I would like to share a few of them with you today.

In some nursing homes each employee is assigned a patient. The employee and patient visit on a personal basis daily. The employees are from all departments in the nursing home including administration, nursing, diet kitchen and maintenance. Lasting friendships sometimes develop.

There are nursing homes that are located in country settings that have small garden areas for the patients so that those who enjoyed gardening can continue to do so.

RESIDENTS are maintaining their independence; they are encouraged to look after their personal care and get dressed daily. Very few still stay in their gowns and robes all day.

Married couples no longer are separated — he on the men's floor, she on the women's floor — although some couples choose not to room together.

Nursing homes are being designed by architects that have special training in gerontology. They have designed the homes with safety and comfort for the elderly as the main focus. The furniture in the common rooms is sturdy and built with the arthritic in mind. Some nursing homes have other rooms for entertainment besides a TV room. There are smaller rooms for playing cards and areas that are arranged so a person can listen to tape recordings of books. The patient and family in many situations make most of the decisions regarding the furniture in the patient's room.

THE TREND IN entertainment is toward more active involvement on the part of the patient. Guest speakers are included as part of their program group activities. One nursing home in Ontario has arranged the showing of first-run movies (although the residents seem to enjoy the oldest more).

Community groups that entertain the patients, such as choirs, stay after they are finished and visit with the patients. The patients requested this because their contact with younger people is limited. One nursing home has a pet day where employees who have pets bring them in to the home so the residents can enjoy this contact again.

In general, the quality of life in nursing homes is improving. Most of the staff members I met attended my workshops at their own expense. They are an enthusiastic group of professionals who deserve a great deal of praise and credit.

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Setting up house is order of business

Here's how area House members were recorded on major roll call votes at the opening of the 97th Congress. There were no Senate votes.

roll call report

COMMITTEE RATIOS — By a vote of 180-220, the House turned back a GOP effort to put more Republicans on such key committees as Ways and Means, the tax-writing panel, and Rules, the committee with life-or-death control over pending bills.

Overall, Republicans wanted ratios on all committees to better reflect the increased GOP strength in the House. The Democrat-to-Republican ratio in the 97th Congress is 56-44, down from 53-47 in the 96th. The vote came during debate on a measure laying down House rules for the 97th Congress.

Supporter Henson Moore, R-La., said, "The Ways and Means Committee

is being stacked . . . by a philosophical minority in this house . . . the very same people who were repudiated by the American people on Nov. 4 . . ."

Opponent Jim Wright, D-Tex., said: "Just as the American people chose to select a Republican to sit in the White House, just so have the American people chosen a Democratic majority to exercise leadership in the House."

Members voting yet wanted more Republicans on key committees. Rep. Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, and

William Broomfield, R-Birmingham, voted yea.

Rep. David Bonior, D-Mt. Clemens, William Ford, D-Taylor, William Brodhead, D-Detroit, and James Blanchard, D-Pleasant Ridge, voted nay.

came during debate on the preceding vote).

Rep. James Jones, D-Okla., who was in favor of blocking consideration, said it was "premature" for the House to take up the measure limiting spending to a percentage of GNP. He promised a House vote on the proposal later in the year.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING — The House voted 216-179 to block consideration of additional House rules for the 97th Congress. Turned aside by the vote were proposals to limit federal outlays to a percentage of the Gross National Product (22.5 percent of GNP in fiscal 1982, for example), and to give the Budget Committee rather than the Rules Committee jurisdiction to police the congressional budget process; supporters said the Budget Committee would be more tight-fisted. The vote

Opponent Trent Lott, R-Miss., said the House should "demonstrate to the American people at the outset of this new Congress that we are deadly serious about righting the devastated economy and assisting our new president in bringing government spending under control."

Members voting yet were opposed to the additions to House rules. Bonior, Ford, Brodhead and Blanchard voted yea. Pursell and Broomfield voted nay.

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