

First Of Its Kind Memory Disorder Prison Unit: Federal Inmates Certified As Certified Nursing Assistants, Federal Correctional Staff Certified With Specialized Certification

USA - English ▼

The National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners (NCCDP) credential enables inmate staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to respond to cognitively impaired inmates

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National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners →

02 Dec, 2019, 09:03 ET

SPARTA, N.J., Dec. 2, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- The National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners (NCCDP) credential enables Correctional Facility staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to respond to cognitively impaired inmates. The prison system has been historically ill-equipped to handle the aging inmate population, particularly those suffering with dementia, and in July 2019, under the direction of Rear Admiral Stephen Spaulding, Warden, the first of its kind Memory Disorder Unit (MDU) opened at FMC Devens in Massachusetts. The unit is staffed by inmates who are Certified Nursing Assistants and have completed the Massachusetts state required nursing assistant course and meet Massachusetts requirements for certification. The staff nurse educators were certified as Certified Correctional Personnel Dementia Trainers (CCPDT) and the correctional guards were certified as Certified Dementia Trained Correctional Personnel (CDTCP), after completion of the ADDC Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care curriculum developed specifically for correctional facilities and presented by National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners.



Why is awareness of dementia in prison so important?

The inmate population in the United States is aging. This reality is further compounded by the fact that individuals who are incarcerated are generally at an increased risk of developing dementia due to several risk factors associated with their lifestyle. The prison system has historically been ill-equipped to manage this type of inmate because there is currently little to no staff training on how to effectively manage inmates suffering from cognitive impairment disorders. Consequently, these inmates are often held to the same standard as inmates in the general population, facing unproductive disciplinary action in response to the negative behaviors resulting from impulsivity, disinhibition, and impaired judgment. This leads to safety concerns for both staff and inmates.

Memory Disorder Unit (MDU)

Since nursing homes are not equipped to handle violent offenders, placement of these inmates in a nursing home is not an option. Under the direction of Rear Admiral Stephen Spaulding, Warden at FMC Devens in Massachusetts, the Memory Disorder Unit (MDU) opened in July of 2019. It is the first unit specifically geared toward housing and treating inmates suffering from dementia in the Federal Bureau of Prisons and is the first unit of its kind in the prison system of the United States and abroad. Warden Spaulding chose Captain Michael Bollinger to lead the development team in planning and creating the specialized housing unit using the nursing home model.

FMC Devens' nursing home model includes policies and procedures that were specifically developed for this unit that address current best practices such as: therapeutic care using an interdisciplinary team approach, safety and security, pat searches, communication and de-escalation techniques, pharmacological management of dementia, therapeutic recreation programming, and consultations to religious services, dieticians, and physical and occupational therapists when indicated. Inmates who are in the end-stage of dementia are placed in a specialized comfort care program on the unit.

FMC Devens contacted the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners and had twelve Nurses certified as Certified Correctional Personnel Dementia Trainers. All staff who work on the MDU are required to complete 8-hours of comprehensive Alzheimer's disease and Dementia Care curriculum developed by the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. The staff then receive the credential of CDTCP Certified Correctional Personnel.

Dementia Trained. The CCPDT trainers will continue to provide comprehensive dementia education to personnel, nursing assistants, volunteers, and clergy. The curriculum provides a better understanding of dementia, enabling staff to have the knowledge and tools necessary to respond to the challenges the staff face when working with cognitively impaired inmates.

What does the CNA Nursing Assistant Certification consist of?

FMC Devens reached out to the American Medical Certification Association (AMCA) and was subsequently approved as a testing site for nursing assistant certification. The Home Health Assistant/Nursing Assistant Certification Course is a three part program supported by the AMCA. The first part of the program provides the inmate companions with the basic ideas of the nursing assistant certification course.

It consists of 160 hours of classroom instruction on: first aid and general safety, medical terminology, basic pathophysiology, observation and communication, documentation and legal issues of the health assisting profession, and health assistant skills.

The second part enables the inmate companion to take the NOCTI Health Assistant Assessment. After meeting the required score (73.6%), the companion will register to take the NAC Exam from AMCA. They will then take the NAC Exam. After meeting the required score (70%) they will complete and submit a certification application form to the AMCA.

Part three includes four months of on-the-job clinical experience in the MDU under the supervision of the nursing staff at FMC Devens. Functions that are not allowed to be performed by an inmate due to policy are completed using training aids and training mannequins.

They are also provided Dementia Training by the trainer but are not eligible for CDTCP because NCCDP does not certify anyone convicted of a federal crime.

Why Give an Inmate a CNA Certification?

The MDU development team recognized the opportunity to further fulfill the mission of the BOP to provide self-improvement opportunities for re-entry into society by implementing a certification program in which volunteer general population inmates can work toward becoming Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), giving them a skill that they can use to

establish their crime-free lives upon release. The healthcare field continues to represent the fastest growing segment of our nation's economy and there will continue to be a demand for highly qualified individuals to fill the CNA role.

What Crimes Prevent an Inmate from Becoming a CNA?

Can inmates have a felony and gain employment as a CNA? Yes!! There are currently 6 states that have no law barring those with a felony conviction record from becoming a CNA: Colorado, Wisconsin, New York, Vermont, Maine, and Hawaii. All remaining states require state board approval on a case by case basis. All states prohibit individuals with a history of convictions for violent offenses such as murder, manslaughter, assault and battery. They also cannot have convictions for ANY sexual offense, fraud, or embezzlement.

About Michael Bollinger

Michael served as Captain at the Federal Medical Center, Devens, Massachusetts, for twenty five years. He opened the first Memory Disorder Unit in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Michael is a Certified Dementia Trained Correctional Personnel, Certified Correctional Personnel Trainer, Certified Alzheimer's Disease Dementia Care Trainer, Certified Dementia Care Manager, Certified Dementia Practitioner with National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. Michael provides consulting services in the area of MDU implementation, Dementia Education, Correctional Training, and Correctional consulting.

About NCCDP

The National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners was established in 2003 and has tens of thousands of members throughout the United States of America and many countries. The NCCDP provides Alzheimer's disease and Dementia Care education globally and issues dementia certifications to health care professionals and Frontline staff, first responders and correctional personnel. The NCCDP has many certifications: CDP Certified Dementia Practitioner, CADDCT Certified Alzheimer's Disease Dementia Care Trainer, CDCM Certified Dementia Care Manager (for dementia unit managers), CDSGF Certified Dementia Support Group Facilitator, CFRDT Certified First Responder Dementia Trainer, CPCHCP Certified Personal Care Home Care Professional, CCPDT Certified Correctional Personnel Dementia Trainer, and CDTCP Certified Dementia Trained Correctional Personnel. NCCDP also has credentialing for Home Care Agencies and Dementia Units within Assisted Living communities or nursing home facilities that exceed all state and federal regulations. NCCDP

sister company is the International Council of Certified Dementia Practitioner who provides a Montessori certification Certified Montessori Dementia Care Professional certification. This is an online six hour course developed by Dr. Cameron Camp founder of the Center for Applied Research in Dementia.

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