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Well-Spring retirement community in Greensboro first in North Carolina to receive special state license for investing in its workforce

RALEIGH—Well-Spring, a continuing care retirement community in Greensboro, is the first organization to attain a special North Carolina New Organizational Vision Award (NC NOVA) license for organizations that demonstrate their commitment to quality by nurturing a stable and skilled direct care workforce.

The special license was awarded by the North Carolina Division of Facilities Services after an independent review by The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence, North Carolina's quality improvement organization.

“We're glad to be the first,” said Steve Flemming, executive director of Well-Spring, which provides both adult care and skilled nursing services. “We want to be a catalyst for others. The program is off and running.”

NC NOVA is a first-in-the-nation program that rewards adult care homes, home care agencies and nursing facilities that voluntarily meet higher standards for investing in the training and job satisfaction of their direct care workers. Direct care workers, including nurse aides, personal care attendants and other paraprofessionals, give 90 percent of the hands-on, long-term care delivered in North Carolina.

“Retention of staff is an essential component of quality care. We are really so proud that Well-Spring stepped out and was first,” said Susan Williamson, president and CEO of the North Carolina Non-Profit Homes for the Aging, a statewide association that includes Well-Spring. “NC NOVA demonstrates the high level of quality care in this facility.”

Polly Welsh, RN, Director of Regulatory Systems of the North Carolina Health Care Facilities Association (NCHCFA) had this to say. “We know that residents and families value the quality of their relationships with staff, as much, if not more, than

any other aspect of care. NC NOVA provides an opportunity to nourish relationships by guiding employers to accomplish an important paradigm shift in supervisory practices that have long been established in business culture. North Carolina, along with the NC NOVA partner team, created a non-regulatory process to enhance staff empowerment and staff support."

NC NOVA was developed under a Better Jobs Better Care demonstration grant, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies and awarded to the North Carolina Foundation for Advanced Health Programs. A Partner Team (see list below) including long-term care provider associations, direct care workers and supervisors, consumer advocates, educators and state regulators began work in August 2003 to create NC NOVA. In July 2006, legislation establishing NC NOVA as a statewide program was signed into law. The law becomes effective on Jan. 1, 2007.

Fleming credited the NC NOVA Partner Team and state officials for their support of NC NOVA. Jeff Horton, Chief Operating Officer of the N.C. Division of Facilities Services, said that the program will be good for direct care workers, providers, recipients and their families across North Carolina.

"The Division of Facility Services is excited to be a part of the NC NOVA program," Horton said. "We believe the program has great potential to encourage long-term care providers to take the care and services they provide to the next level and show the public they are doing so with the special licensing designation."

The Better Jobs Better Care program is managed by the Institute for the Future of Aging Services, the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA).

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North Carolina BJBC Partner Team:

- *Association for Home & Hospice Care of North Carolina*
- *Direct Care Workers Association of North Carolina*
- *Duke University Gerontological Nursing Specialty Program*
- *Harnett Manor, Lillington*
- *North Carolina Assisted Living Association*
- *North Carolina Association, Long-Term Care Facilities*
- *North Carolina Association of Non-Profit Homes for the Aging*
- *North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services*
- *North Carolina Friends of Residents in Long-Term Care*
- *North Carolina Health Care Facilities Association*
- *North Carolina Institute on Aging, UNC-Chapel Hill*
- *The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence.*

Better Jobs Better Care is a four-year, \$15.5 million research and demonstration program, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies. Its goal is to achieve changes in long-term care policy and practice that help reduce high vacancy and turnover rates among direct care workers in long-term care and contribute to improved workforce quality. Technical assistance is provided in partnership with the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute (PHI).

Better Jobs Better Care is directed and managed by the Institute for the Future of Aging Services (IFAS), American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA). For more information about Better Jobs Better Care, contact Robyn Stone at (202) 508-1206, rstone@aahsa.org or visit www.bjbc.org.