

## Debra Jeranek



Since entering the field of healthcare, I have worked for a wonderful company in long term care and assisted living and have had several roles including nursing assistant, home health aide, LPN, staff development nurse, and currently serve as Director of Nursing. I have enjoyed the leadership role, managing people and a department, and have continued to "teach" due to the ever changing clientele needs and regulations. I have a desire and passion to maintain a positive, teaching atmosphere and allow for open communication and sharing of ideas. As I look to further my education, one motivating factor is to tie my degrees together and actually teach or train new or upcoming nurses interested in the long term care or geriatric setting. There are rewards for the care provided, but also in the fact that nurses can learn something new every day.

Because of my work background, I do have an interest in geriatric nursing. I believe, although there are some practitioners that have a strong interest in the well being of the geriatric population that too many medical generalities are used for this population and a different approach needs to be considered. Treatment or medication that works when a person is in their sixties may not work when they are eighty. With people living longer and the high cost of healthcare, it would be beneficial to take a closer look at how the geriatric population is treated and the alternative care settings that could provide that care.

I look forward to enhancing my education and continuing to provide the leadership role in long term care or alternative geriatric care settings. I have had the opportunity to work with multiple family members as we, as a team, care for their loved one. In particular, there was one family in which we had the opportunity to get to know one parent through the assisted living and the other parent through the skilled nursing facility. In a strange turn of events, the parent from the assisted living ended up being transferred to the skilled nursing facility where we were able to provide end of life care. The family was so thankful for the opportunity to have the continuum of care provided on our campus and to this day is still involved with our facility and we are still caring for the other parent. This positive interaction has impacted the staff knowing that everyday people need our skills and knowledge so that they have the peace of mind that their loved one is cared for.

Frustrating things in long term care or basically any type of senior healthcare are reimbursement and regulations. It is very difficult to provide and give the care that the seniors deserve with the constraints on reimbursement and the ever tightening regulations. I saw the need to focus on reimbursement and at the same time get the nursing management team to utilize their strengths, which in turn improved regulatory compliance. I took the feelings of passion to care for the seniors and drive to learn to be able to take a nursing department from meeting the minimum to striving for the best. The staff have embraced the need to understand how the care they are providing needs to be documented in order to get the reimbursement to continue the cycle for the next senior in need. I truly look forward to enhancing my education and continuing to practice nursing in older adult services.