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### MADRID HOME AND WESLEY ACRES JOIN IOWA CAREGIVERS IN ORAL HEALTH CARE PROJECT

The Madrid Home and WesleyLife have joined Iowa CareGivers in a two-year pilot project to develop and test a new competency-based oral health specialty training for direct care professionals. The purpose of the project is to increase access to and improve the oral health care of Iowans who are homebound or residing in a senior living community, thus improving their overall health, comfort and dignity.

Oral cancer results in nearly 8,000 deaths each year. More than half of these deaths occur among persons 65 years of age and older. Oral health problems can cause pain and suffering, as well as difficulty in speaking, chewing, swallowing, weight loss, aspiration pneumonia, and even heart problems. One's self-esteem is also associated with the loss of teeth.



“Good oral health care is essential to the well-being of our residents. Through the oral health care specialty training we believe everyone within our organization, including the residents and their families, will better understand how vitally important oral health care is to one's overall health”, said Julie Rossow, Administrator, Madrid Home.

Chad Piper, Wesley Acres executive director, said: “Wesley Acres is pleased to partner with Iowa CareGivers in pilot testing their Oral Health Specialty Training. As a WesleyLife Community for Healthy Living, Wesley Acres understands the direct correlation between regular, quality oral health, and the dignity and well-being of its residents. This project is a tremendous opportunity for our direct care professionals to evaluate a training that will lead to development of standardized curriculum for oral health care providers.”

“This curriculum will become the first state-recognized specialty under Iowa's new ‘Prepare to Care’ curriculum designed for those who work in direct care. The pilot project will involve the training of 15 instructors and at least 150 direct care professionals in Iowa, including participants from the Madrid Home and WesleyLife,” said Di Findley, Iowa CareGivers.

The Mouth Care Matters project is an initiative of the *Lifelong Smiles Coalition* supported by the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, providing oral health care education for certified nursing assistants, home care aides and other direct care professionals. Training will entail both classroom instruction and hands-on practice.

The initiative has received financial support from Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, and the Iowa Department of Public Health through a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Cooperative Agreement.

Key partners include Wesley Acres/WesleyLife, Madrid Home, University of Iowa Colleges of Nursing and Dentistry, Iowa Dental Hygienists' Association, Direct Care Workforce Initiative, University of Iowa National Resource Center for Family Center Practice, Iowa Department of Public Health, Des Moines Area Community College, Harder+Company Community Research, and other public and private agencies.

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**About Iowa CareGivers—a nonprofit organization**

Iowa CareGivers is an independent nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that exists to ensure that all Iowans receive good care and support when and where they need it. It does that by serving the needs of those who provide most of the hands-on care and support...the direct care workforce. The Iowa CareGivers also serves in a supportive role to health and long term care providers and family caregivers. For more information about Iowa CareGivers and the Mouth Care Matters project, please call Mary Ann Young at 515 223 2805 or email at [maryann@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:maryann@iowacaregivers.org)