

# **Nursing Home Staffing Shortages and the Impact on our Loved Ones**

# Staffing shortages may result in an increase of:

1. Falls\*
2. Pressure Ulcers – “bedsores”
3. Weight loss/dehydration
4. Medication errors – nurses being rushed/ interruptions
5. Delays in noticing changes in condition – increased infections
6. Increased use of antipsychotics
7. \* Falls may occur for various reasons: UTI (urinary tract infection), low blood pressure, impacted cerumen (earwax) that may cause diminished hearing -

# What can we do for our loved ones?

## Review medications quarterly and as needed with the interdisciplinary team and MD/NP/PA

- 1. Blood pressure medications
- 2. Diabetes medications
- 3. Antipsychotics/antidepressants
- 4. Anticoagulants – coumadin, Eliquis, Pradaxa
- 5. New medications ?

## Consultations

- Wound Care – many facilities have weekly rounds by NP/MD
- Dietician and Speech Therapy – swallow evaluations
- ENT – hearing aides, ear cleaning
- Dental/Podiatry

## Weight Loss/Hydration

- 3 day meal monitoring
- Monthly weights – may be increased to weekly
- Hydration – check your loved one's tongue/mouth/skin
- Review protein/albumin levels

## Routine Labs

- Diabetes – check HgA1c quarterly or 2x a year if controlled
- Thyroid Panel –
- CMP or Chem 7/SMA7 – monitors hydration/kidney status, nutrition status

# What can we do for our loved ones?

1. Medications - poly-pharmacy is a risk factor for falls. Most medications are processed through the liver/kidney. As these functions decline, dosages need to be adjusted. The geriatric population, like the pediatric population has specific guidelines for dosing
2. With weight loss, dosages for diabetes/antihypertensives may need to be decreased or stopped.
3. Make sure that your loved one is on a proper bowel regimen and that they are moving their bowels regularly. Constipation may lead to UTI's.
4. Consultations: Speech therapy - diets may need to be downgraded to prevent aspiration (pneumonia)
5. Vaccinations - if they are not contraindicated due to allergies/religious beliefs. Pneumonia, Influenza, Covid Boosters, Shingles
6. GOOD HAND WASHING to prevent the spread of infection!

**Be the best advocate  
for your loved one!**

**By working closely  
with the  
interdisciplinary  
team and  
practitioners**