

Script – Print - Meeting Aging Critical Care Needs

OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing adds new degree of study

It's been described as a silver tsunami. The number of Americans over the age of 65 is expected to double from roughly 50 million today to nearly 100 million by 2060 and the growth is already seriously straining health care treatment and delivery.

Presently, it's estimated that thirty percent of those 65 and over require some type of geriatric care. Meantime, the number of geriatric specialists is shrinking.

Recognizing this trend, the OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing this fall established an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) Adult Gerontology Acute Care program. It's aimed at addressing the urgent need to have more APN's in acute care settings.

"The physicians in hospital settings are stretched very thin, just like they are in primary care settings," says Shannon Lizer, Graduate Dean of the OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing. "And advanced practice nurses provide a lot of support to patient care and also to the physicians with whom they work."

College of Nursing Assistant Professor, Richard McLaughlin, who is also a nurse practitioner fellow, is the faculty lead for the program. He says there is a clear distinction between acute care training versus primary care.

"Primary care is geared and educated to take care of the elderly population with chronic issues, such as, maybe, heart failure out of the hospital - diabetes, hypertension, those types of things," says Richard McLaughlin, Assistant Professor at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing. "Where the acute care practitioner, for geriatric population, they are educated and trained to take care of those elderly people that come into the hospital that have had an exacerbation of one of those diagnoses."

The college offers several ways to achieve the (APN) Adult Gerontology Acute Care degree. From a Bachelor of Science Nursing to a Doctorate Nurse Practitioner. There is also a post-Masters certificate in acute care for Family Nurse Practitioners or a primary care prepared nurse practitioner who does not have acute care education.

To learn more, go to osfhealthcare.org/sacn.