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STTI Launches the Center for Nursing Excellence in Long-Term Care™
New Tool Assesses Nurses' Geriatric Knowledge

Indianapolis – Twenty-two percent of the world's population is projected to be 60 years or older by 2050 (2009 United Nations report, *World Population Ageing*). The United States Census Bureau predicts that by 2030 there will be more than 92 million people over the age of 60. This ageing of the population creates unprecedented demands for health care providers—especially nurses.

Nurses, who are on the front lines of health care delivery, require appropriate education and knowledge in order to manage the complex health needs of older adults. According to the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing, less than one percent of all registered nurses (RNs) are certified as gerontological nurses and only three percent of advanced practice nurses are certified in geriatrics.

To help address these knowledge needs, the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) has created the **Center for Nursing Excellence in Long-Term Care™** (The Center).

STTI, in collaboration with experts from the Hartford Centers of Geriatric Nursing Excellence, skilled nursing facilities, national providers, trade associations and geriatric consumer groups, is developing a portfolio of products and services that will help educate nurses and transform their role in the long-term care environment. These products and services will enable RNs to take a stronger leadership position within their environments to ensure quality care and life for patients and residents.

“As the population ages, we at STTI recognize that older adults have specialized health care needs. Through The Center for Nursing Excellence in Long-Term Care™ and our other ageing initiatives, we are helping nurses acquire the knowledge they need to deliver the best possible care,” says STTI President Karen H. Morin, RN, DSN, ANEF.

A new product now available is the **Geriatric Nursing Knowledge Assessment (GNKA)**, developed with support from the Foundation for the Future of Aging.

This tool assesses the RN's knowledge in nine major competency areas common to geriatric nursing. As nurses identify and pursue their individual educational needs, they will ultimately be equipped to deliver the most coordinated, holistic and cost-effective care possible.

Geriatric Nursing Knowledge Assessment Competency Areas

1. Dementia, delirium and depression
2. Fall assessment, prevention and management
3. Diabetes and cardiovascular disease
4. Skin integrity
5. Pain
6. Bladder/bowel continence; constipation
7. Infection
8. Unmet needs manifested as behavioral symptoms related to dementia
9. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
10. Palliative care/end of life

“GNKA is the only assessment currently available that is designed specifically for long-term care nurses to identify their strengths and areas for improvement and then suggest the necessary resources for obtaining it,” says Christine Mueller, RN, PhD, FAAN, of the Minnesota Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence.

Mueller led the project development team of Amy Cotton, MSN, FNP-BC, FNGNA, FGNLA, of Rosscare in Bangor, Maine; Kristine Mauk, RN, PhD, CRRN-A, GCNS-BC, of Valparaiso (Ind.) University; and Katy Nguyen, RN, MS, GNP-BC, of the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Nursing. These geriatric nursing experts are affiliated with The Center.

“The Foundation for the Future of Aging is committed to addressing workforce-related issues as America faces an acute shortage of registered nurses and other caregivers just as the demand for skilled care is on the rise,” said Jan Thayer, board president of the Foundation for the Future of Aging. She continued, “We are delighted that our first grant has helped the dedicated nurse educators and nursing professionals from Sigma Theta Tau International produce this new tool. Now, we are looking forward to honing in on some of workforce issues identified by the new Geriatric Nursing Knowledge Assessment tool.”

Visit The Center's website, www.centerfornursingexcellence.org, for more information and resources.

STTI's Center for Nursing Excellence in Long-Term Care™ supports the knowledge, professional development and leadership growth of nurses who provide care to older adults. STTI's collaborative initiative will result in the development of several tools and resources that will transform nurses' roles and enable them to take a stronger leadership position within their environments to ensure quality care and life for patients and residents of long-term care facilities.

The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the learning, knowledge and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide. Founded in 1922, STTI has inducted more than 400,000 members in 86 countries. Members include practicing nurses, instructors, researchers, policymakers, entrepreneurs and others. STTI's 469 chapters are located at 586 institutions of higher education throughout Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ghana, Hong Kong, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, The Netherlands, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Swaziland, Sweden, Taiwan, Tanzania, the United States and Wales. More information about STTI can be found online at www.nursingsociety.org.

The Foundation for the Future of Aging was established in 2009 and embraces the future of aging by engaging in dialogue and projects that will help to improve the lives of older Americans and people with disabilities. www.future-aging.org.

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