

The secret ingredient to one nursing home's dramatic drop in antipsychotic use

September 28, 2018

Janet Snipes, Executive Director, Holly Heights

Holly Heights Nursing Center in Denver has demonstrated dramatic reductions in the use of antipsychotic use in recent years. Janet Snipes, whose been with the home for more than 40 years, says there is one crucial component to their success.

“The secret ingredient is staff engagement and buy-in, to get them all to have the drive, commitment and dedication to want to improve quality,” Executive Director Janet Snipes told *McKnight's*. “All it takes is that one resident who you have made that huge difference for in their life. When staff see that, they become the champions of quality and the drivers to continually pursue excellence.”

The nursing facility has been able to drop the percentage of residents receiving antipsychotics from 19.6% in 2013 down to just 1.7% in the year that followed. They've been able to maintain that low rate ever since.

The 133-bed nursing facility found many residents on the drugs often had behavioral problems. Holly Heights drilled down into those details to understand the root causes. They came up with non-pharmacological interventions to address behavioral issues, tailored to each individual resident. Those included warm blankets, cups of tea and listening to music.

She gave the example of one resident who was withdrawn, and on multiple antidepressants and antipsychotics. Since weaning her off those medications, the woman has become a completely different, vibrant resident who now participates in their resident council, greets people at the door and takes part in activities.

“When you see the difference this makes in people's lives, it really fans the flames of your passion for quality,” Snipes said.

