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Providing high-quality long-term care for our most vulnerable citizens is an ongoing challenge. We have a long way to go. Through my work, I hope to contribute to improvements in the quality of long-term care through changes in public policy, preparation and support of staff, and attitudes toward long-term care. This can only be done by working collaboratively, across disciplines. Long-term care offers exciting opportunities for nurses to be leaders in care quality improvement.

Professor Barbara Bowers is known worldwide for her research and work in the field of long-term care and improving the quality of patient care in nursing homes. Her interest in these issues began during her first job after graduating from nursing school, which was in a nursing home. She was horrified by the neglect suffered by the residents and was fired by the director of nursing for reporting the nursing home to the state health department. After seeing the conditions at that home, Bowers began her career as a scholar in the care of older adults and a mentor to future leaders in the efforts to improve quality of care and quality of life for older adults. Bowers is an international expert in the development and retention of nursing home staff and the relationship between work practices and care quality. She is the founding director of the UW–Madison School of Nursing Center for Aging Research and Education.

Key Accomplishments

- Founding team member of the Wisconsin Partnership Program/Care Wisconsin
- Served as a consultant on federal policy initiatives with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
- Provided expert assistance in long-term care issues and research methodologies to government agencies in New Zealand, Japan, Canada, and Iceland
- Involved with cutting-edge research on quality of care and implementation of THE GREEN HOUSE® Project, an innovative new approach to long-term care, creating small, intentional communities across the nation that promote quality of life for residents and staff
- Director of education for type II translational research in the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research

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