

00:13 - 02:05

Doug Bryant

Welcome to Certify It. Today, we have one of my favorite people in the entire world, actually.

This is Kim Mountz. She is the Vice President of Clinical Services for Hillcrest Healthcare. And we're going to be talking today about the medication aid program that we offer here at the Mason Center for Healthcare Education. And who better to talk about that than someone who has real-life experience inside the senior living communities that we're all a part of. And a fun fact that she just reminded me of, she actually is the coauthor of the program that we have here at the Mason Center. She was extremely instrumental in us being able to get this passed through the state and the Board of Nursing. So, Kim, welcome. We're glad you're here. So why don't you talk a little bit about how you got into health care in the career that you've had in care?

Kim Mountz

I got a little later start, I didn't go straight out of high school and go to college the traditional way, but my mom is the one who got me into it. My mom worked in a factory for 40 years, and she said, "You need to do something that you can take care of yourself."

So nursing. She said, "Go into nursing." And that's what I did.

Doug Bryant

And then now your mom didn't stay at the factory?

Kim Mountz

Nope. After 40 years, she went to a long-term care facility in our community and worked as a they called them room aid or hydration aide. And she passed ice and answered the phone or did non-clinical things she did.

Doug Bryant

Well. That's interesting. So your mom never really got never really benefited from the healthcare education that is out there today, but she wanted you to be able to do that.

Kim Mountz

And she was so proud that I made it through.

Doug Bryant

And you're a registered nurse. So, how long have you been in long-term care?

02:05 - 04:32

Kim Mountz

I started in long-term care. When I graduated, I went back then in those days, you had to go to the hospital, you know, when you had to go on night shift. And it was just a it was a lengthy process. So a friend of mine worked at the long-term care facility, and they said, "Come on

over.” So I went over, and that's where I started. I started out, as a floor nurse, then a charge nurse, then a unit manager. So I went all the way up. But, when you're in long-term care, I know people talk, and they say you cannot do anything but long-term care, long-term care. Nurses can't do anything but provide long-term care.

But that's not true. So. But I'll let the talk get to me. And I went to the hospital, and I could do just as much as they could do in an ICU. I did, did different things in the hospital, worked on the floor, short stay, ICU, and wherever they pulled us. But I was even when I was in ICU, I was drawn toward the elderly, and nobody else wanted to take care of those people. They wanted the young heart patients. So I was always taking care of those. So I always went back to long-term care. And that's just what I love.

Doug Bryant

I had a mentor one time tell me that once you've worked in long-term care, it gets in your blood and it can't come out. And I found that to be true. You know, my story was more if you had told me in high school that I'd be working in long-term care when I was a profession or a career, out of sight. You are absolutely crazy. What in the world would I do in a nursing home, with all the stigma that comes with that?

And unfortunately. But it does get in there, and people who work long-term care love long-term care, and they stick with it because we're a very small community of people. So you did help us get the Medication Aide? What was it that excited you so much about Medication Aides finally being able to be used in Tennessee?

Kim Mountz

It was new, and it was exciting for me because in long-term care, a big portion of your day is passing medications. So to be able to take that off of a nurse and let her do other things, it was just exciting to me. And I think they're like you said, they're underutilized. And we were kind of the pioneers of that. So I feel strongly that we could utilize them a lot more.

04:32 - 06:20

Doug Bryant

What do you think is the hesitation that seems to be in our industry about utilizing them?

Kim Mountz

I think that the DONs and the nurses think that if we get Medication Aides, they're not going to have a job. And that's not true at all. That's not the job for the Medication Aide.

Doug Bryant

That was one question that they asked. I know when you and Brandi went to Nashville to get the program approved, “Are you doing this to try to replace nurses?” And your answer was, what?

Kim Mountz

Absolutely not. They're an extension of the nurse. So yes, that was a question

Doug Bryant

Much like the nurse practitioner is an extension of the physician. We've not gotten rid of physicians and nurse practitioners. I've been around a long time. One thing that I've always found intriguing about medication aids, too, is that they have to be CNAs. So they have to already be certified nursing assistants with the state. The criteria that the state puts in place is they also have to be stable CNAs in their work history.

They can't have had more than two jobs in the past 12 months. Which also means that if we can get CNAs to skill up into Medication Aides, then the people who know our people that we're serving on a daily basis, the most, they get to spend the most time with them, who are doing the personal care and really building those relationships with them becomes the person that's passing their medications. How important is it that the person passing the meds is someone who really knows the resident?

Kim Mountz

It's extremely important. It's the trust that they build with the residents. And if you don't trust someone, chances are you're not going to take medicines or ask a question. And they won't do that with a CNA and someone they know.

Mid-Roll

You're listening to Certify It, the podcast for advancing your career in care. Brought to you by Propel Insurance. Find innovative insurance solutions in the toughest risk management environments. Over 500 senior care providers nationwide trust Propel to keep their business thriving. Find your momentum with Propel Insurance.

06:39 - 10:48

Doug Bryant

It would be really interesting for somebody to do a study. And maybe you can do one in Hillcrest when we get medications, I aides up and fully operational in our facilities. But it would be interesting to know if there is a higher rate of success at giving medications and fewer refusals when it is that person that trust them so much to, to be able to add data to the positive outcomes that even we've seen. We do have a building that utilizes Medication Aides. So, how have you seen that work there when you've seen that in action? Because you've been on the floor doing audits and,

Kim Mountz

They're very focused. I won't say more than a nurse, but they're very focused. They take their job very, very seriously. And the residents love them because they know them.

Doug Bryant

So if there were a CNA out there that was thinking about becoming upskilled as a, as a Medication Aide or they're trying to decide between Medication Aide and possibly LPN or going on to nursing school, what would your advice to them be?

Kim Mountz

My advice would be to take the Medication Aide class. That way, you can dip your toe in the water. And if you absolutely just, you know, this is not for me, then you would know that. So I think that would be my advice to someone. Because it is such a large part of the job, even when you go to LPN school and you become an LPN or an RN, when you're on the floor, you're passing medications.

Doug Bryant

And we've seen the criteria that are required and the education that's required to be a medication aid. I can only imagine that with the amount of material that they cover in that three week class, and then the one-week clinical, you would be very it would be very easy to then transition to a nursing program, because you're going to already have almost a fast-track start on a lot of that information. So tell us a little bit about what's covered in that medication aid training.

Kim Mountz

I guess the easiest way to say it is the why. It's not just how you give the medication, but it's also the why you give the medication. They have to take pharmacology in that. So it's not just an oh, I'll take this easy class. It's a hard class, but it's well worth it when you get out of it. And to go from that, let's say you wanted to go to LPN school. You'll know a great deal when you get in there because going straight off the street, you know, I had never done that. And a lot of the questions were medication questions, and I didn't know them. So you have to learn. So there's a great there's a great advantage to being a Med Tech.

Doug Bryant

We had one of our students before that who had just finished, and they had come back in to do some of their, I guess, their skills, getting ready to do their testing. And she said, I did not know I was taking anatomy and physiology and pharmacology and three weeks, because it's every body system, it's pharmacology, and it's not a one and done either.

Like, once you've gotten certified, you also have to have continuing education. And eight hours of that continuing education is pharmacology, which we just so happen to offer here at the Mason Center for Health Care Education. So that is something else that, if you're already a certified medication aide in Tennessee and are looking for somewhere to do your continuing education, those classes are hard to find.

And that continuing education is hard to find. And that is something that we do provide here, but that also keeps their skills very fresh. And even in Pharmacology is not something that nurses have to have continuing education on

Kim Mountz

I think it's a wonderful program. And I think if anybody's thinking about, furthering their career, please apply and come to the class.

Doug Bryant

Well, thank you so much for being with us today. This has been Certify It the podcast for advancing your career and care.

Outro

We hope you enjoyed this episode of Certify It by the Mason Center for Health Care Education. Get connected with us on social media and at the masoncenterknox.com. If you haven't yet, subscribe to this podcast on YouTube and anywhere you get your podcasts. And if you're interested in sponsorship or donations to help further our cause of providing affordable, flexible health care certification programs for individuals seeking career mobility in skilled nursing, senior living, and long-term care fields. Visit the masoncenterknox.com.