

## **PRESS RELEASE from The Relatives & Residents Association**

17 July 2008

### **'Care home residents have the right to equitable access to comprehensive, high quality health services like any other citizens' say delegates at R&RA conference on health services for care home residents**

The Relatives & Residents Association held a successful conference on the subject of **health and wellbeing in care homes** on Wednesday 16 July. Delegates heard from dementia care specialists, pharmacists, dental practitioners, doctors, nutritionists, continence specialists and sleep researchers about the problems, and some of the solutions, experienced by older people living in care homes.

There were calls for thorough and regular medication reviews and better management of continence in care homes. Delegates heard how thoughtless night-time routines and staff shortages can affect residents' sleep patterns. Calls were made for improved access to sight, hearing and dental services. There were pleas for improved education and training in the care needs of older people to be required for all health practitioners. The importance of adequate and appealing food in contributing to both health and quality of life was emphasised. The need for wider recognition of the needs of people with dementia underpinned much of the day's discussion.

Concluding the day's deliberations, delegates praised the examples of good practice that they had heard about but stressed the need for them to be disseminated widely throughout the health and social care sector. Care home residents have the same rights as everyone else to hospital and health services. Those rights need to be exercised and protected.

'This marks the start of a campaign to improve access to health care for all care home residents' says Judy Downey, R&RA Chair. 'We can only succeed with the support and enthusiasm of all the stakeholders involved – relatives, health professionals and care home staff.'

**ENDS**

#### **Note to editors**

1. The R&RA is the national charity that supports older people in care and their relatives, and campaigns for improved standards and better quality of life for all care home residents. For further information see its website [www.relres.org](http://www.relres.org)  
Advice line: 020 7359 8136
2. Details of speeches and discussions will be placed on the R&RA website shortly. It is planned to issue a publication in the autumn.
3. For further information about the R&RA's Healthcare in Care Homes campaign, contact Gillian Dalley, R&RA Chief Executive, on 020 7359 8148, or Les Bright, Professional Advisor to R&RA, on 01392 424696.