

COVID-19 Update – 4/22/20

An Industry Perspective:

At Westminster Village North, our primary goal is the safety and well-being of our residents. As the outbreak from COVID-19 continues to grow, we continue to be vigilant in our focus because we serve the most vulnerable population. Regrettably we have had exposure in our Health Center, however, we remain strong in our commitment to both our staff, residents and their families that we will do our best to serve those entrusted in our care.

We're on the front line of the coronavirus pandemic. COVID-19 is a previously unidentified virus, which means care providers of all types – including those working at organizations like ours where older adults receive care – are learning about it in real time. And because public health officials have identified older people as high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, we are on the front line. Everyday we do our part to aggressively prevent and mitigate the spread as we deliver compassionate care under challenging circumstances.

The pandemic highlights that organizations like ours are a vital component of our public health issues. Nursing homes, home health, visiting nurses, and other providers of aging services have long played a valuable role in how Americans receive the care they need. For example, organizations like ours collaborate with many other care providers like doctors, local hospitals, home health and hospice companies, etc. As the virus spreads, our role in the public health system is magnified – and should be prioritized.

Aging service providers like our organization have distinct and urgent needs in this pandemic. Without enough PPE and wide-spread testing, we cannot safely orchestrate patient transitions, take care of new or current residents, or protect staff. While we understand these needs are vital in an inpatient setting, there is a major push now to move patients out of hospitals to nursing homes or to home and community-based settings. The lack of resources for aging services is an additional challenge in a health crisis unlike any we've seen before.

The coronavirus pandemic exacerbates the well-documented, longstanding workforce shortage in aging services. This healthcare crisis increases our workforce needs. For instance, we need more staff to care for sicker residents, to adhere to regulatory requirements that ban communal meals and mandate enhanced infection control procedures, and to cover open shifts for sick staff or those who can't report to work. These strains compound an already challenging workforce environment.

Our business is complex. We don't have a simple operating structure like a corner store or neighborhood restaurant. We have multiple sources of revenue, from reimbursements and government funding to private pay, and are working under a range of guidelines and regulations. Rising costs of caring for a full load of patients with a changing case-mix, buying extra PPE and other supplies, losing

staff and paying overtime – coupled with decreased revenues – are already causing shortfalls for organizations in aging services.

We are a mission-driven organization with deep roots in our community. The services we provide are fundamental to the lives of the people we serve, their families, and our community. We are driven by a higher moral purpose to serve this population in accordance with our mission. We care deeply about the role we play to provide much-needed care services and support in people's lives.