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GOAL: Develop Specific Methods to Clearly Communicate with all Staff Teams



PLAY STRATEGY

COVID-19 is a new disease, and information about community spread, mitigation strategies, and treatment approaches are evolving. Congregate living facilities serve people who are highly vulnerable to the disease’s most catastrophic outcomes, and staff members report to work with their own vulnerabilities. This ongoing crisis demands effective leadership with a strong foundation in consistent, open, and ongoing communication with staff, residents, families, and community.

How will leaders clearly communicate a series of policy adjustments? How can leaders cultivate open and trusting relationships with staff members across the congregate living facility?



HOW TO RUN THE PLAY

Senior leaders:

- Are onsite daily and hold virtual all-staff huddles at least weekly to answer questions, hear concerns, acknowledge fears, and assess the evolving situation in-house and in the community. Leadership ensures that the COVID-19 huddle is clearly communicated as such in advance and that, after the huddle, a summary is emailed to all staff the same day. Also communicate the various types of support available to staff at all levels, including senior leaders, staff supervisors, infection preventionists, and human resources managers.
- Solicit volunteers to work in the “red zone,” where COVID+ residents stay, and these leaders hold open discussions regarding staff members’ concerns about working in the red zone.



Shift supervisors:

- Huddle with care team staff at the start of each shift to clearly communicate infection control practices, including how to implement and problem-solve around cleaning practices, and share any updates.
- Consistently solicit questions and concerns from staff members.
- Provide one-on-one guidance to care team staff around PPE use and other infection control practices.

Care team: participate in huddles at the start of each shift to express concerns, practice infection control, and keep up to date on conditions within the facility and community.

All facility staff: participate in senior leadership huddles to keep abreast of COVID-related policies, discuss the implementation of such policies, give and receive emotional support, and navigate the challenges posed by the disease.



TIPS AND TRICKS

- Establish a dedicated email address for staff questions on COVID to frame weekly Q & A huddle led by senior leaders.
- Use a video meeting platform for all-staff huddles, and send out connection information as soon as the meeting is scheduled, and again within 15 minutes of the start of the call.
- Shift supervisors incorporate COVID-related topics into existing staff huddles, specifically noting any changes in policy or COVID status.
- Care team huddles are facilitated discussions framed by questions and concerns posed by staff, and typically last 10-20 minutes.
- Leadership maintains up-to-date understanding of federal, state, and local policy developments (e.g., CMS, CDC, public health department) and COVID activity in the local environment.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Leadership huddle agenda: Q & A conversation and listening session; COVID status of facility and local community with related data; internal policy and practice updates (including infection control and visitation); updates from CDC and local public health department.

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