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Lessons Learned From COVID-19

Why the Right Data Matters for SNF

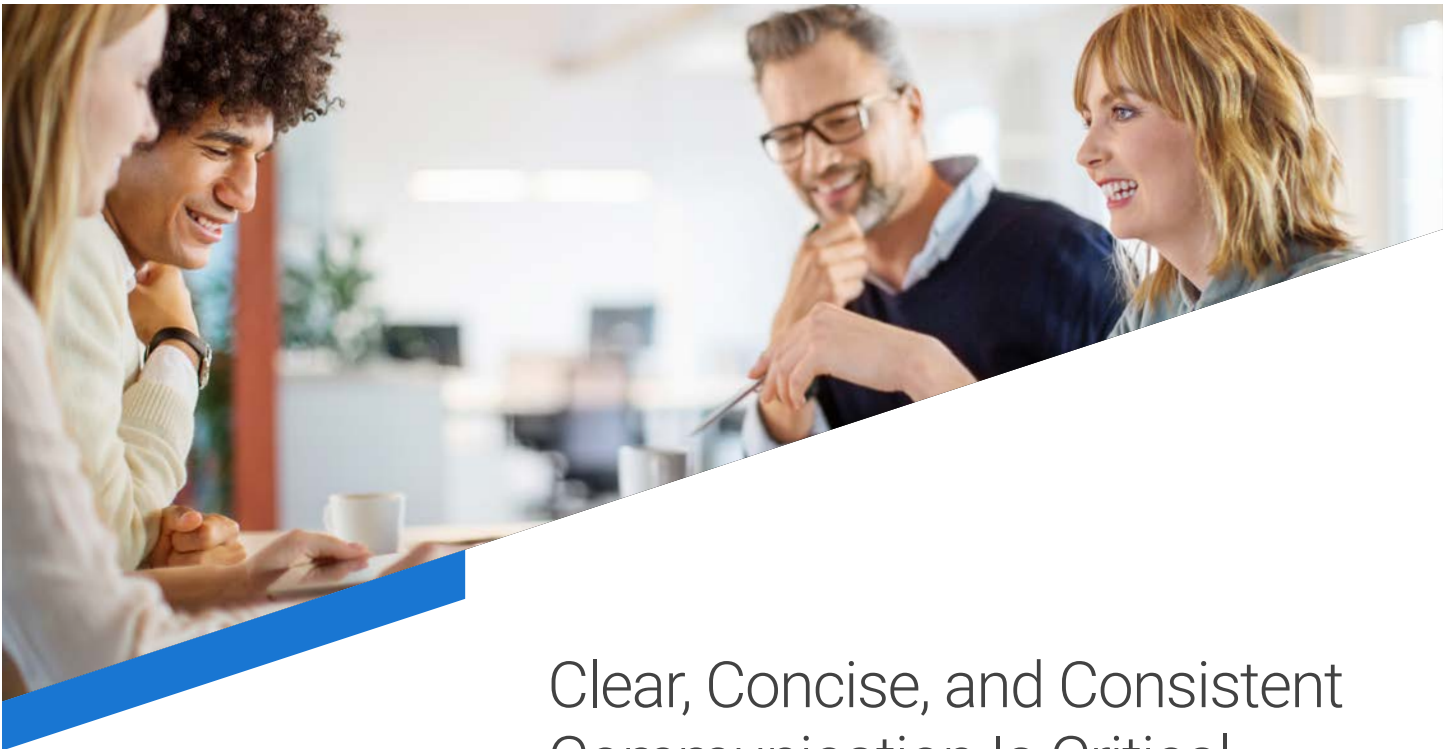


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Like all healthcare providers, the COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for skilled nursing facilities. However, it has also revealed valuable lessons in how we react, plan, and continue to navigate this new normal.

The following is a list of lessons learned to assist skilled nursing providers in:

- Developing better care transitions for their residents
 - Preparing their organization for what lies ahead
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Clear, Concise, and Consistent Communication Is Critical

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Increase the level of one-on-one and group communication to ensure you're on the same page, allocate resources appropriately, and make it as seamless as possible for clients and staff to communicate.

April Catterton

PCS Manager
myPotential at Home

Pandemic or not, sharing information with employees, patients, their families, and others in the care spectrum is essential. It may sound easy, but many healthcare providers learned the hard way over the last seven months that this seemingly simple task is anything but.

Rising fears and anxiety brought on by the swirl of conflicting and often unclear information about COVID-19 made it difficult for organizations to provide assurance and guidance to peers, staff, residents, and families.

“Originally, we overwhelmed ourselves and our clients by sending too much information, without first curating it,” said April Catterton, PCS Manager of myPotential at Home. “Now we understand that first establishing a clear message and then sharing it across the entire organization is our number one priority.”

Rather than responding as soon as possible just to respond, many healthcare providers have benefitted from taking a step back, confirming information and sources, and working to create clear, concise, and informative messages, in a timely manner. After all, having access to the right information is crucial to the effectiveness and validity of your communications.

“Increase the level of one-on-one and group communication to ensure you're on the same page, allocate resources appropriately, and make it as seamless as possible for clients and staff to communicate,” said Catterton. “If you're managing a highly contagious infection, you should be going through the same processes of communication each and every time.”

02

Every Business, Especially Skilled Nursing, Needs an Emergency Preparedness Plan

It's easy to say, "we should have been better prepared," but the more effective response is "now we know how to prepare." The good thing is, it's not too late for organizations to develop or strengthen their disaster preparedness plan.

An effective Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) covers staffing, support, and supplies needed to ensure facilities are equipped to be successful and to execute quickly in a crisis. It accounts for all residents, provides a broad view, and includes key administrators, associations, departments of public health, local and county health services and anyone else who is involved in patient care. It also dictates how these entities work together and align to be effective and efficient.

In preparing for COVID-19, skilled nursing facilities realized they needed to account for all parties involved, or the plan wouldn't be effective. "It's something we all struggled with when we realized not only do I need to be prepared for the COVID patient from the care perspective, I need to be prepared to protect my other residents and staff as well" Raymond Thivierge, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer, Sava SeniorCare Consulting.

Facilities also need the correct data in order to complete their EPP. Skelly Wingard, Mid Atlantic Vice President, Continuum of Care at Kaiser Permanente said, "Chart-level data helps you to identify high-risk patients and the resources they need, and you need an understanding of your partners so you know who has resources to help when you need it. The more data you have and the better you understand it, the better equipped you are to react and intervene when tragedy strikes."

For both skilled nursing facilities and the hospitals they partner with, correct data and efficient communications between care continuum partners is key to creating a complete EPP.



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Skelly Wingard

Mid-Atlantic VP | Kaiser Permanente





03

Informed Decisions Depend on Data

Looking at past data allows organizations to spot trends, predict outcomes, and formulate effective plans. But, with something as impactful and unexpected as a global healthcare pandemic, there is no previous data. That doesn't mean that data isn't paramount to successful care transitions and patient resident management. It just means that organizations need to create their own roadmap and having the right data in place is imperative in order to move forward.

Because of COVID-19, sharing data has become a necessity rather than a luxury. As the ability to share data becomes increasingly more common, organizations need a solution that will allow them to populate patient records with accurate and complete information before they arrive at a facility.

So far, the providers navigating the pandemic have relied on real-time data, which includes pertinent information such as: COVID-positive patients, pending test

results, and patient risks. Having this data readily available allows them to move equipment and support, rather than people, ensuring a safer and more comfortable transition of care.

By accessing a complete patient history—including COVID and non COVID diagnosis and medication for reconciliation — providers can significantly reduce the risk of readmission, increase healthcare efficiency, decrease costs, and best of all, provide the best possible care for their patients.



Had we had even more data and a way to share it across a continuum, we would have known where there is an open bed and we could have provided even better care transitions.

Dr. Tere Koenig

Internist Geriatrician, Executive VP, and Chief Medical Officer
Medical Mutual

Knock Down Silos

Collaboration has never been more important in healthcare. Providers need open channels and clear processes for connecting and communicating with each other, their residents, and the families.

Why now? As Thivierge said, “There are a lot of different opportunities coming out of this and most importantly, coming from collaboration. These needs are driving innovation and collaboration and the receptiveness to that collaboration is creating some pretty fertile territory for us to make some innovation in our business.”

Collaboration within the LPTAC network, with other local skilled nursing facilities and hospitals helps to better address hotspots when they appear, prepare for transitions, and provide more seamless transfers.

Throughout the pandemic, “One of the things required was enhanced communication and enhanced collaboration. That need was only further exasperated by the involvement of families...the anxiety level for the family member and for the new admission was tremendous. So, we also found ourselves working in creative ways to assist hospitals and their discharge planning offices with enhanced ways of talking to us so that we could communicate with the families” said Thivierge.



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Raymod Thivierge

EVP and Chief Strategy Officer | Sava SeniorCare Consulting



05



Evolve With the Industry

During a crisis, there's a tendency to rush to find a solution. People want answers, plans, and they want it yesterday. But what happens after? What are the lessons learned that impact the future of our business? For skilled nursing, we realized that we need to evolve in order to move forward. The industry and post-acute business will never be the same again. And we think that's a good thing.

"The role we play on the continuum is evolving and the lessons learned through this experience have given us the opportunity for the continuum to rethink the role of the skilled nursing provider in the sectors" said Thivierge. Through this pandemic, we have learned a lot about our business and the healthcare continuum as a whole and what we

have taken away from that is we need to evolve our industry, and our role within the continuum, in order to achieve success in the future. "We have had to really think about our role as a pivot point in the communication and ensure that we think about the 360 around us.



It's time to think about the flow of the patient through the continuum, not the steps along the way. It's about giving the right patients the right care in the right place.

Raymod Thivierge

EVP and Chief Strategy Officer | Sava SeniorCare Consulting

Learning from this pandemic is far more productive than being overwhelmed or sidetracked by what we wish we had known or had done differently.

To learn how SNFs can benefit from a proper data collection process, read our blog **Three Ways Technology is Optimizing Patient Transitions** to see how the right data can help your organization plan for the future.

Take Action with Insights

Learn More

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