



Florida Association of
Aging Services Providers

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Florida Association of Aging Services Providers

Guest Editors: James Dodd, Summit Home
Healthcare Products
Andrea Marsh, Bay County Council on Aging

Message from the President

By Andrea Busada, Broward County Elderly and Veterans Services



So, we are now several months into the COVID-19 pandemic and everything about our lives has changed, except our commitment to serving seniors. I have been working from home since April 6th and it is not quite the idyllic situation that I imagined it would be. While I can see my co-workers via camera feed, I miss the spontaneous conversations that happen during the course of a day. My house is a mess and even though I am still skipping breakfast and lunch, I have gained 4 pounds. Also, my cat ate my homework - literally. As I look around my home desk (aka my dining room table), I see chewed-up papers everywhere – with a big fluffy cat sleeping on them.

Everything about our jobs has changed too. We are doing

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This Issue's Sponsor



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business differently, but effectively. Our Area Agencies on Aging and the Department of Elder Affairs have been flexible and open to new procedures rendered necessary because of the nature of this emergency. Everyone is coming up with innovative and effective ways to do even more. Necessity is the

mother of invention, after all. I am excited and anxious to see how many of these changes to our operational procedures become a permanent part of our system and look forward to all of us sharing our ideas with each other. In the meantime, keep helping others, stay positive, stay safe and stay healthy!

COVID-19 May Change Retirement for Millions of Workers

For those nearing retirement, unemployment rates and record job losses due to COVID-19 will decrease the national average wages this year and will have an impact on a portion of the Social Security benefits. According to a study from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, "due to the Coronavirus-induced recession, Social Security's Average Wage Index will fall in 2020, resulting in 13 percent lower annual retirement benefits for individuals born in 1960 compared to what the 2019 Social Security Trustees Report projected." The Social Security trust fund could be depleted sooner than previously projected due to the rise in unemployment and fewer workers and employers paying payroll taxes.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 13.6 percent of Americans aged 55 and older were unemployed (and actively seeking work) in April, compared to 2.6 percent in January. Due to potential health risks, many older Americans have chosen not to work or to retire early. According to a study conducted by IZA Institute of Labor Economics, the number of people who are not looking for work and have declared themselves retired has risen from 53 percent in January to 60 percent in April.

During recessions it is common for older individuals to apply for Social Security early, before reaching the full retirement age. It is also

expected that people are going to rely heavily on Social Security in retirement. There may also be an increase of people who are tapping into their tax-shielded retirement accounts early because, as part of the CARES

Act stimulus package, they can withdraw up to \$100,000 without the usual 10 percent penalty. A culmination of these factors may mean that workers who are nearing retirement are more likely to live in poverty as they age.



Resources

- Pandemic Will Mean a Worse Retirement for Millions of Workers
- How the Coronavirus Could Permanently Cut Near-Retirees' Social Security Benefits
- Bureau of Labor Statistics News Release
- Labor Markets during the COVID-19 Crisis: A Preliminary View
- Status of Older Workers

Phase 2 and the Return to “Normal”

By James Dodd, *Summit Home Healthcare Products*



Return to normal. It's a catch-phrase, but in some cases Aging Services in Florida look very different than they did 6 months

ago and some of these changes are our new “normal” for now, and maybe longer.

After months of restrictions that saw many businesses closed and workers encouraged to stay home, Florida is proceeding to open back up. Aging Services in Florida are continuing to look at how we can meet the needs of those most vulnerable to the virus, while not compromising their safety.

Phase 2 began on June 5th for 64 of the 67 counties in Florida. This phase has provided the opportunity for many high risk businesses to open back up with some restrictions such as maximum capacity and social distancing. Bars, nightclubs, movie theaters, gyms, and salons are some of the businesses that have opened in this phase.

A recent incident involving a bar, Lynch's Irish Pub in Jacksonville, saw 16 friends and 7 of the bar's employees testing positive for coronavirus, all traced back to one night at the bar. Just like many other states, Florida is also seeing a rise in new cases of Coronavirus. As Florida reopens, one can make the case that it will require more care to prevent the spreading of Coronavirus than it did during the lockdown or Phase 1.

Phase 2 also emphasizes that the most vulnerable, mainly Florida's senior citizens, should continue to stay home and those who interact with them should be very careful to minimize exposure risk. This is the population we serve, so we must take the utmost care with them.

One of the more visible and tragic casualties for Aging Services in Florida has been the closure of Congregate Meal sites, Adult Day Care and Senior Centers. Unfortunately, many administrators in Florida's Aging Services network agree that this doesn't look like it is going to be changing anytime soon. Often sought out by seniors for fellowship and socializing they continue to be considered too high of a risk to reopen. Many sites are just not capable of meeting

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social distancing requirements. Senior transportation services are also affected and have ceased operations in many cases, unlikely to return while the pandemic is still a threat.

Seniors food insecurity is a prominent issue within Florida in normal times, but with meal sites closed there has been an increased demand for home delivered meals. Florida's providers were able to find innovative models such as delivering a week's worth of frozen meals rather than daily hot-served deliveries, which both reduces contact with the client and the workload for the volunteers who deliver them creating a more efficient service to meet that demand. The demand for home delivered meals may soon plateau but it certainly won't abate anytime soon, and these models are likely to stay in place for the foreseeable future. There is some concern that many individuals added to these programs weren't considered high priority under normal circumstances, and that as Florida returns to a more normal routine it may create some problems in continuing to provide meals for everyone in need.

Working from home has become a new normal for many Aging Services staff members including case managers. This is another change that may be a part of our routine as we progress through the pandemic. In-home visits by senior companions and case managers have

become less common if done at all. The agencies that serve Florida's seniors will be analyzing the benefits of this arrangement and it may continue to be a standard practice for some employees.



PPE products, despite industry shortages and problems with the supply chain, are likely to continue to be required tools of our trade for a long time into the future. Even when a vaccine is developed it will take significant time for it to be manufactured and distributed throughout the world. PPE such as masks, gloves and products like hand sanitizer have proven effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19, so expect these products to be a part of our daily routine when interacting with our clients for the foreseeable future.

Florida's Aging Service Providers have risen to the challenge of this Pandemic by shifting priorities and meeting the rapidly changing needs of Florida's Seniors. This innovation and many of these changes are likely to continue for the duration of the pandemic and some may stay long after COVID-19 is an unpleasant memory.

The Best in Challenging Times

By Andrea Marsh, Bay County Council on Aging



**Bay County Council on Aging
partnered with Bay Area
Transportation to delivering meals
to seniors**

We have all experienced many new challenges since “COVID-19” and the “Coronavirus” have become common terms in our everyday conversations. The wearing of masks, social distancing, and the unceasing use of hand sanitizer and washing of hands are all now part of our everyday lives. In the beginning of the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, providers of direct services for senior adults were faced with situations they had not experienced in the past.

With the closing of meal sites, there was an unprecedented increase of seniors receiving Meals on Wheels in a very short period of

time. Agencies faced a shift in services that needed to happen pretty much overnight. How do you meet the needs when there is an increase of 100%+++ requests to serve Meals on Wheels in a two week time frame? Even when you work out the logistics of ordering and then preparing this type of increase in meals on a daily basis, how do you get them to clients? The answers lie within the organization and also within the community that is being served.

Since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, the number of senior adults receiving Meals on Wheels has more than doubled for our organization. Our initial concern, and it was a great concern, was how to get meals delivered to all of these seniors that we were now serving. The delivery of meals requires bodies – individuals willing to take 2 hours of their day and serve the community. Thankfully, the community responded. New volunteers signed up to help us meet the challenge. Additionally, Bay Area Transportation, our local transportation coordinator, provided 5 drivers with vehicles every day to deliver meals. Other communities have similar stories.

Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee County partnered with a local mega-church to use the church’s furloughed staff to deliver meals. In St. Petersburg, senior center staff volunteered to deliver meals.

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BAY COUNTY
Council on Aging

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YMCA in Pensacola prepares to deliver home delivered meals in partnership with Council on Aging of West Florida

In Pensacola, the Council on Aging of West Florida partnered with their local YMCA which provided volunteers to deliver meals. Additionally, restaurants have donated meals for seniors in their communities. Volunteers are also shopping to provide essential items for seniors who are

uncomfortable going to the grocery store. I feel that many more of these new partnerships have also formed throughout Florida.

Employees have stepped up. Many are helping in areas in which they are not normally assigned. Drivers are assisting in the kitchen because there are no clients to transport to congregate meal sites. Telephone calls are being made by office staff providing telephone reassurance to check on seniors who are self-isolating and live alone.

Senior adults are a special population. As service providers, they are our special population. Seniors have contributed to their communities and to their country for many years. Now, with an unsettling pandemic in their midst, it is gratifying to see the community step up and assist them through these unpredictable times. We know there are better days ahead. Thanks to all who are helping seniors get to better days.

Recruitment for Senior Center Manager in Hillsborough County, Florida



Job Description: Senior Supervisor (Aging Services)

Job Overview: This position is responsible for performing day-to-day operational management duties for a senior center which provides routine wellness programs and services to active older adults in any of a large variety of departments and agencies, with responsibility for planning, coordinating, supervising and controlling assigned resources to achieve unit/section objectives. Please click [here](#) for more information.

Application Deadline: June 29th

What is the Way Forward? How will Agencies Provide Needed Services in the COVID-19 Era?

By Katrina L. Davenport, MS, Community Services Department, City of Miramar



The COVID-19 pandemic is responsible for global unemployment, financial hardship, food insecurity and isolation on a scale not experienced in my lifetime. The cumulative effect of the financial, physical and mental toll is immense, so how do these factors affect our most vulnerable? How do we return to normal or a new normal? What is the way forward?

This pandemic's immediate impact has been especially difficult for the senior population above the age of sixty (60). Senior Centers and facilities that offer Adult Day Services closed their doors for an indeterminant amount of time. Whether nutrition, recreation, transportation, socialization or in-home and community services, many seniors are wholly dependent upon the support provided by the various senior services agencies. With no available treatment or vaccine, how are we going to meet the needs of seniors and reengage them in a meaningful way while

maintaining their health and wellbeing in the COVID-19 era?



During the earliest days of the COVID-19 outbreak, efforts have been focused on ensuring seniors continue receiving meals and basic in-home and community care. Many projects and agencies are working to ensure senior meals and services are available and have not had the time to take a moment and contemplate what comes next. However, the one thing that keeps me awake at night is "How are we going to provide needed services and preserve the health of seniors who are so vulnerable and at risk during COVID-19?"

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health departments have established safety guidelines to minimize the spread of the virus. Social distancing, personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitizers and disinfectant have all become common in our discourse. Yet, how will agencies implement these precautions where seniors gather in a manner that will truly protect their health and wellbeing?

According to the National Institute on

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Aging, research has linked social isolation and loneliness to higher risks for a variety of physical and mental conditions: high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease.

The socialization opportunities available at congregate meal sites highlight the importance of adequate nutrition, yet we must address how this pandemic has impacted the ability to dine with companions and the role companion dining plays in the preservation of health.

Many providers are creatively delivering services utilizing technology. Offering virtual physical fitness classes and activities that directly address senior balance, flexibility and strength and help mitigate fall risk. However, for those with no access to technology, these benefits are not available while the doors are closed. The evidence-based programs that address disease-prevention and health-promotion services that are designed to help elders prevent or manage their health conditions are integral to promoting a healthier lifestyle; yet the program fidelity will preclude them from being offered virtually. Physicians have cancelled non-emergency doctor visits. How can we preserve the health of seniors let alone deliver services that slow both physical and mental decline?

Last, but certainly not least is the ability to integrate and serve the most vulnerable who also have limited financial resources. While online shopping is available for everything



from groceries to restaurant prepared meals, the poorest among us are unable to avail themselves of these conveniences. Drive-thru lanes are not an option for many who no longer have personal vehicles and meal delivery services may be too costly.

The challenge before us is not only going to require the continued collaboration of professionals across the aging network, but it will also take creativity, ingenuity, additional resources and innovation. We will have to create a method to continue engaging our clients in pursuit of our mission to provide services so that seniors can improve their quality of life and maintain their independence.

Our focus on helping people meet immediate needs will eventually have to be replaced by a focus on what we do next. What is the way forward?

Resources

- [Social isolation, loneliness in older people pose health risks](#)

DOEA Encourages Seniors to Talk It Out

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs has released a series on mental health and resources available to seniors on their Facebook [page](#).

Seniors who are feeling anxious, depressed, or lonely are being encouraged to:

- Talk it out! Stay connected to family, friends, and loved ones through phone calls, emails, text messages, and social media.
- Talk it out! Talking to a trained mental health professional can help.



Disaster Distress Helpline
Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster. The disaster helpline answers calls related to the Coronavirus.

1-800-985-5990
Call or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Department of
ELDER AFFAIRS
STATE OF FLORIDA

#talkitoutFL



DEPRESSION
Is Not a Normal Part of Growing Older

If you are concerned about a loved one, offer to assist him or her to see a health care provider or a telehealth provider to be diagnosed and treated.

Call
1-800- 662-4357

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STATE OF FLORIDA

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Study Shows Increase in Unpaid Caregiving



Last month, the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and AARP presented [Caregiving in the U.S. 2020](#). The study provides a picture of unpaid family caregivers based on data collected in 2019. This study expands on related studies that were conducted in 1997, 2004, 2009 and 2015 by NAC. The methodology used in the 2015 was replicated in this study and allows for comparison to the 2015 data.

According to the study, 19.2 percent of respondents were caregivers for adults over the age 18. This is primarily driven by the increase in the prevalence of caring for a family member or friend over the age of 50. It is estimated that 41.8 million Americans have provided unpaid care to an adult over age 50 in the prior 12 months (16.8 percent). The increase in prevalence may be due to the following factors:

- The aging Baby Boomer population requiring more care
- Limitations or workforce shortages in the health care or long-term services and supports (LTSS) formal care systems
- Increased efforts by states to facilitate home- and community-based services
- Increased numbers of Americans self-identifying that their daily activities, in support of their family members and friends with health or functional limitations, are caregiving

Most caregivers of adults care for a relative, typically a parent or parent-in-law (50 percent), spouse or partner (12 percent), grandparent or grandparent-in-law (8 percent). Adult care recipients have greater health and functional needs reported by their caregivers than those reported in 2015. The recipients needs include long-term physical conditions (63 percent), emotional or mental health issues (27 percent), and memory problems (32 percent), including Alzheimer's or dementia (26 percent). Despite the increasing complexity of care recipients' conditions, there was a decrease in caregivers' reports of their recipients being hospitalized overnight. Only 31 percent report that their recipient has any paid help. 27 percent report that it is difficult to get affordable services in their recipient's area. Among those who coordinate care, 31 percent find it difficult to coordinate care amongst the various providers.

While 51 percent of caregivers report that their role gives them a sense of purpose or meaning, these feelings often coexist with feelings of stress and strain. 21 percent of caregivers report feeling alone and many report physical, emotional and financial strain. Unpaid caregiving is increasing in prevalence and these caregivers often serve as a core piece of the health and LTSS systems as well as main source of long-term care for adults living at home and in the community. Policy makers and other stakeholders are concerned that as the aging population grows and more people need care, there will be fewer potential family members available to provide everyday help.

Resources

- [Caregiving in the U.S. 2020](#)
- [Infographic](#)

Review of States' Pandemic Regulations in Assisted Living Communities



Long-term care settings are at a high risk of sustained COVID-19 transmission because a majority of the residents have underlying health conditions and are aged 65 and older and are in communal living environments.

Researchers reviewed the regulations of all 50 states and the District of Columbia pertaining to infection control and pandemic response in residential care and assisted living communities. Their [findings](#) were recently published in the Journal of the American Medical Directors Association (JAMDA). They identified 31 states describing infection control policies. Ten states included language regarding reportable disease and requirements for reporting to local Public Health departments and two describe pandemic emergency preparedness. Only six states directly reference general resident isolation practices for communicable diseases within their infection control policies. However, in response to COVID-19 many long-term care settings are currently limiting nonessential visitors. It should be noted that, according to this study, nine states did not have policies related to epidemic, pandemic or infection control in assisted living.

While nursing homes have federally regulated infection prevention and control guidelines and are surveyed annually for regulatory adherence,

states have primary responsibility for licensing and oversight of residential care or assisted living communities. Researchers stated that "it remains unclear if and how states require these communities to mitigate, prepare, and respond to infection among their residents, a group particularly vulnerable to the effects of the current COVID-19 pandemic."

Another factor to consider is that the sociocultural model of assisted living emphasizes a homelike, non-institutional setting and practices. This model, associated with resident quality of life, can conflict with standard clinical and public health practices such as wearing gloves, masks, respirators, or scrubs.

Many states are likely re-vamping their policies so they are better prepared for future outbreaks.

For more information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in nursing homes and long term care facilities, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [website](#).

Resources

- [Variability in State Regulations Pertaining to Infection Control and Pandemic Response in US Assisted Living Communities](#)
- [Ready or Not: an Investigation of States' Pandemic Regulations for Assisted Living](#)
- [Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control Assessment Tool for Nursing Homes Preparing for COVID-19](#)
- [Nursing Home Reopening Recommendations for State and Local Officials](#)



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Member News



We would like to congratulate **Mr. Carlos L. Martinez**, [United HomeCare](#)'s President & CEO for being awarded the prestigious **MONSIGNOR WALSH OUTSTANDING HUMAN SERVICES PROFESSIONAL AWARD** by the United Way of Miami-Dade.

Upcoming Events

**Please join us for the
Virtual FCOA Conference!**

August 25-26, 2020

**For more information, please
visit our [website](#).**

[Register Here](#)



*Virtual Aging
Network Conference*

August 25-26, 2020



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Promoting Independence in our Community

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<http://www.coawfla.org/>



There's just no place like home.

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<https://www.northmiamifoundationforseniors.org/>



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