

Envisioning
the Future

2020 &
BEYOND

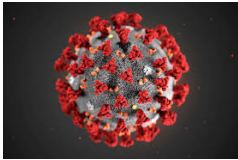
Making It Together: Engaging Residents and Families in Times of Crises

Lori Smetanka, JD
Robyn Grant, MSW

The National
CONSUMER VOICE
for Quality Long Term Care
— Linda K. Miller


Pioneer
Network

COVID-19: A Crisis Like No Other



Impact of COVID-19

- Resident deaths
- Separation of residents and families
- Isolation of residents
- Emergency guidance and rules
- Impact on staff and operations



Residents and Families

What to tell them?
How to communicate with them?
How best to interact?

Guidance and Emergency Rules – Allow Limited Waivers

- Restrictions on in-person visitation, group meals and activities
- Waiver of notice before transfer – only for purpose of cohorting due to COVID-19
 - For all other transfers – all notice requirements apply

Residents' Rights Still Apply

- Rights – to be informed, participate in care, self-determination, file grievances,
- Care – attain or maintain highest practicable well-being
- Facility responsibilities – inform residents and families about care, changes in condition, respond to grievances

Engaging Residents and Families

Importance Highlighted by the Pandemic

Partners not
Adversaries

- Common goals
- Identify solutions, creative ideas
- Investment in decisions

Work through Resident and Family Councils

- Help the Resident and Family Councils stay active and engaged –
 - Use social distancing or virtual connections
- Meet with resident and family council officers to provide regular updates, get feedback, assess morale
- Family council email/phone chains

Find ways to engage residents and families

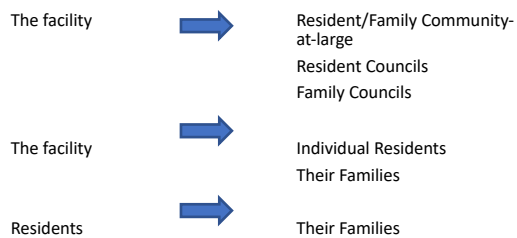
- Enlist residents and family members in COVID response
 - Addressing concerns that arise
 - Determining communication strategies
 - Setting visitation policies
- Work with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to connect with families



Robyn Grant
Director of
Public Policy &
Advocacy



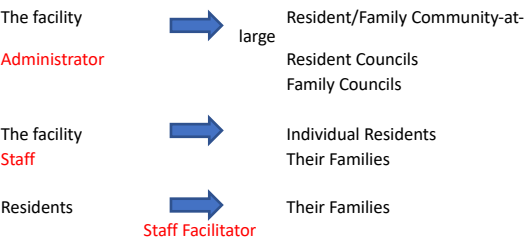
Create a Communication Plan



What the Communication Plan Should Address

1. Who will be responsible for communicating
2. How you will communicate
3. How often you will communicate
4. What to communicate

1. Who will be responsible for communicating



2. How You Will Communicate: Variety of Methods

Individual Family Members

- Email
- Text
- Individual phone calls
- Video chat
- Letters
- Some Apps

Family Community-at-large, Councils

- Email/Listserv
- Text
- Facility website
- Facebook
- Zoom meetings
- Recorded phone messages
- Conference calls
- Letters

How You Will Communicate: Variety of Methods

Individual Residents

- In person
- Letter, handout

Resident Community-at- large, Councils

- Letter, handout
- Video conference if technology is available
- In person (councils – small group with social distancing)

Communication Between Residents and Families

- Some indoor visits
- Outdoor visits (patio, courtyard)
- Phone calls
- “Good, old-fashioned” letter writing
- E-mail, including E-cards
- Video chat/conferencing (FaceTime, Skype)
- Posting photos on Facebook with message from resident to family
- Sending video messages to and from resident

Window Visits



“Drive-through” visits

“Wave window”

Message Boards



(Posted to Facebook by Ingls Nursing Home in Pennsylvania; used with the resident's permission)

3. How Often You Will Communicate

Type of Information	Frequency
Facility information, updates, & conditions	Daily
Individual resident updates, status reports	Tailored to family preferences, but at least weekly
Resident-Family Communication	Based on person-centered care plan

4. What to Communicate: Individual Residents and Family Members

- Families
 - Updates on the resident: their condition and status, any changes
 - Ask what in particular they want to know about their loved one
- Residents
 - Check in about how they're doing
 - Current information they need to know
 - Ask if they have questions or concerns

What to Communicate: Resident/Family Community-at-large/Councils

- Facility conditions/data
 - Information required by interim final rule for residents, their representatives and family members
 - Same information that must be reported to CDC
- Plans for keeping residents safe; preventing/reducing spread of virus
 - Include infection prevention/control measures and expectations for residents, families
- General updates
 - Resident activities
 - What's being done for staff

What to Communicate: Resident/Family Community-at-large/Councils

Visitation policies and procedures

- Virtual/phone visits
 - How they are scheduled, conducted, minimum frequency
- In-person visits
 - Types of visits permitted e.g. window visits, outdoor visits,
 - Compassionate care visits: circumstances in which such visits are permitted; how to make a request, how decisions are made
 - When visits can be conducted e.g. days/times
 - Length of visits
 - Number of visitors allowed at a time
 - Process for signing up for visits
- Infection control measures e.g. screening, face coverings, hand washing/sanitizing, social distancing
- What is not permitted
- Consequences of not following policies/procedures

What to Communicate: ALL Residents and Family Members

Addressing problems and concerns

- Inform residents and families about how to raise a concern, file a grievance
- Create an environment that encourages people to voice grievances, complaints
- Engage residents and families in problem-solving
- Involve long-term care ombudsman when needed

What to Communicate:
ALL Residents and Family Members
Let's make it better



We can make it together


We're better together



Engagement through Visitation

Establish COVID-19 Visitation Policies

- Include residents and families in the development
- Use least restrictive means possible for allowing engagement, visits
- Be clear on how compassionate care, end of life visits will be handled



Virtual Visitation

Work out a plan with each resident/family

CMS - \$3000 per facility available through civil money penalties

Recognize the challenges


In-Person Visitation

- Window
- Outdoor – patio, courtyard, parking lot
- Designated indoor space
- Clearly communicate policies, expectations
- Don't stop/ban the visits if a few don't follow the rules



Lori Smetanka –
lsmetanka@theconsumervoice.org

Robyn Grant –
rgrant@theconsumervoice.org
www.theconsumervoice.org



Thank you!
