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AFFINITY ADVANTAGE NEWSLETTER

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"The time to get vaccinated and defeat COVID is now."

- Denise McQuown-Hatter,
President and CEO

FROM THE CEO: FIGHT COVID! ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES AND GET VACCINATED

By Denise McQuown-Hatter,
President and CEO



Author Victor Hugo once wrote: "Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise."

Here we are in early 2021, and while the COVID numbers are trending in the right direction with the sun peeking out, we have to stay vigilant with our COVID precautions and continue to get ourselves and our community members vaccinated.

Affinity Health Services asks everyone to roll up their sleeves, get vaccinated and do their part in battling the COVID-19 pandemic. This vaccine, and a continuation of the hygiene that has overtaken our daily routines, will lead us to sunnier days.

We want to share that our client-based vaccine campaign was intense and multifaceted. "Give COVID the Boot" was our theme and education was at the top of our agenda's for each staff member. We organized strategic partnerships with our labor unions, community resources and Medical Directors to name a few. Those clients who were able to take full advantage of the resources provided have produced positive results.

We have many people to thank along the way for the successful campaigns including SEIU, AFSCME, Pharmacy Partners, many experienced and dedicated Medical Directors, Dr. Joshua Uy, and supportive boards of directors to name a few. The majority of our partner senior living communities far surpassed the average vaccination rates.

The leadership teams paved the way in their communities by organizing unique and heartwarming recognition for those who

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ENHANCING AFFINITY'S MENU OF SERVICES

Affinity Health Services is pleased to announce enhanced offerings to strengthen and expand post-COVID identified solutions.

Now more than ever, it is critical that senior living providers have multifaceted professionals ready to support, guide and assist clients to provide what they need for surviving and thriving in our new and unique environment.

During the past year, we enriched our expertise by listening to requests from clients and needed services as identified by our consultants.

Our client base is broad and includes faith-based, non-profits, for-profits, government (county- and state-owned senior living communities) and hospital-based clients. Our team of professionals have extensive experience in senior housing, independent living, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living, personal care homes and skilled nursing.

We have rounded out our team of professionals by cross-sectioning our management and consulting lines of services. As our services diversified, we added an Executive Vice President for Business Development and Consulting. This gives our consulting services a broader range while providing more attention to client needs post-COVID.

Areas of concentration include billing services, operational assessments, interim nursing home administrators, infection control surveys, financial forecasting and repurposing and a broad range of clinical and regulatory compliance including COVID policies/procedures and support.

FROM THE CEO: FIGHT COVID, GET VACCINATED

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understand their roles as healthcare workers while also keeping their commitment to protect those that we serve.

These organizations far surpassed the average vaccination rates being recorded in other senior living communities across the state and the nation.

We partner with many senior care communities. Ever since the outset of the vaccine, we have encouraged the staff and residents to protect themselves and those they care about – and those in their care.

This need to be vaccinated also extends to the community as well. The more people vaccinated, the better. We need everyone to step up and, with regard to sleeves, literally roll them up.

A medical specialist we contacted agrees.

“We are on the threshold for an end in sight,” said Dr. Uy, Geriatric Fellowship Program Director with Penn Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania.

“The country needs to have 70% (to be vaccinated) for herd immunity to be effective. This is the largest opportunity we have to lead by example.”

Pennsylvania began distributing hundreds of thousands of COVID-19 vaccines this year. The vaccine received the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's emergency use authorization in December 2020. Vaccination distribution began in January of this year.

While mask-wearing, surface-cleaning, hand-sanitizing and social distancing have played a part in the prevention of the pandemic's spread, the vaccine is the most significant advance.

To again quote Victory Hugo: “Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come.”

The time to get vaccinated and defeat COVID is now.

The vaccine is our hope. We owe it to ourselves and to one another. So let's roll up our sleeves and be brave. The vaccine is our way out of this pandemic. The sun is rising on a new day.

KEEP IT CLEAN: CLEANLINESS, DISINFECTION KEY TO STOPPING VIRUS SPREAD

By Angela Huffman, RN Clinical Services Coordinator

In early March 2020, as news began to emerge about the coronavirus, we immediately began to review and update our infection control policies and procedures. Throughout the pandemic, several infection control mitigation strategies were implemented to moderate and reduce the spread of coronavirus, including:

- Hand hygiene
- Physical Distancing
- Visitation, Activity and Dining restrictions
- Universal Masking
- Increased Cleaning and Disinfection
- Use of Transmission Based Precautions
- Proper use of Personal Protective equipment
- Cohorting strategies
- Screening and Testing Protocols
- COVID vaccination



Although these practices have been the core focus in the news media and regulatory guidance, cleaning and disinfection protocols have been a mainstay in healthcare for years, dating back to the mid-1800s.

Germs are a part of everyday life, inside and outside of the healthcare setting. Some germs are helpful, but others can be harmful and can cause disease. Germs are found everywhere – in our air, soil, water and on the surfaces and objects that we touch. Germs live on our skin and in our bodies. There are times when germs can spread and cause illness.

One of the foundations in infection control is to “break the chain” of infection. Despite the variety of viruses and bacteria, germs are spread from person to person through a common series of events. To be successful in breaking a link in the chain, we must find ways to stop germs from spreading and infecting more people.

To avoid becoming infected by germs from surfaces and objects, it is important that we not only wash or sanitize our hands, but also clean and disinfect the surfaces and objects around us. Cleaning and disinfection of the environment is just one of several ways that the chain can be broken to prevent the spread of germs. The history of cleaning and disinfection dates back to 5000 B.C., when the ancient Egyptians used wine or vinegar to clean and whiten clothing. It was not until the 1600s that scientists began to learn chemicals could potentially kill unseen organisms, opening the door to the study and use of chemicals to kill germs.

There are key differences between cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing. The two major ways to protect ourselves during the COVID-19 pandemic have been washing/sanitizing our hands and cleaning/disinfecting commonly touched surfaces. The process seems basic and self-explanatory until you are trying to decide on which products to use.

While sanitizers and disinfectants are often used interchangeably, they are very different and have varied uses. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting all have different definitions:

- Cleaning “removes germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces by scrubbing, washing and rinsing. Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them it lowers their numbers and reduces the risk of spreading infection.”
- Sanitizing refers to using “chemicals to kill germs on surfaces, reducing bacteria on a surface or an object to a safe acceptable level; but does not kill everything.”

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- Disinfecting “destroys or inactivates both the bacteria and viruses on hard, non-porous surfaces.”

Disinfectants are stronger than sanitizers and can kill 99.999% of germs and are one of the most reliable ways to help lower the risk of spreading germs from surfaces by touch. Disinfectants, such as bleach or a EPA-approved product, are the only products approved to kill both bacteria and viruses on hard surfaces. Reading product labels is essential to understand what the product is used for and how to apply the product. The chemicals being utilized in our communities are EPA approved and are effective against the Coronavirus.

As part of the battle against COVID, our communities have added innovative products. Electrostatic sprayers dispense a fine mist disinfectant to high-touch surfaces that add a protective layer. Portable air filtration with ultraviolet light (UVC) is used to capture and kill airborne pathogens and eliminate bacteria, mold and odor circulating in the air. Providing a safe and sanitary environment for our staff, families and residents remains our primary focus and priority. We remain diligent and steadfast in our efforts to clean, sanitize and disinfect our communities to “break the chain” to move one step closer toward winning the battle against COVID-19.

Be well and stay safe.

TELEMEDICINE: A SERVICE WHOSE TIME HAS ARRIVED

By Tammy Leister, Regional Operational Manager

Telemedicine/telehealth is not a new concept but they certainly are among the new buzzwords that have surfaced since the global pandemic.

The idea of telemedicine as we know it today first appeared in 1924, depicted in *Radio News Magazine* as using a television and microphone for patients to communicate with a physician. Also, Dr. Willem Einthoven, inventor of the EKG in 1906, conveyed data over phone lines.

Telemedicine was used primarily to transmit information, radiological images, and was a way for medical professional to send and receive documents. As technology and the internet expanded, so did the abilities and opportunities for telemedicine.



Telehealth has helped to expand access to care at a time when the pandemic severely restricted patient's ability to see their doctors. COVID-19 has caused a massive acceleration in the use of telehealth. The potential impact of utilizing telemedicine will be improved convenience and access to care, better outcomes and a more efficient healthcare system.

Telehealth has expanded from the early days when only information was shared to being available for on demand virtual urgent care visits, virtual office visits, home health and behavioral health visits.

Long-term care communities now have access to telehealth equipment and services which has positively impacted the delivery of care to seniors. Telehealth in a long-term care setting has provided the opportunity to connect residents with providers at all hours for any care need. This has enabled residents to be treated in place and avoid hospitalization when appropriate.

Telehealth will continue to grow as technology develops. It has already positively impacted the way care is delivered by increasing access to necessary care, improving the patient experience and improved outcomes.

Welcome Back

AFFINITY HIRES ADDITIONAL – YET FAMILIAR – STAFF

Affinity Health Services has welcomed two members back to the management team. Their respective familiarity with the senior health care management consulting company will make a positive difference.

Candace McMullen, Executive Vice President of Consulting and Business Development

Candace had served as Affinity's VP of Operations from 2008-2014 and was a Nursing Consultant from 2004-2007. She takes the helm for sales and marketing of Affinity Health Services as well as expansion of the consulting services line of business. She brings with her experience in operations, consulting, clinical and regulatory management of continuing care retirement communities (CCRC), skilled nursing facilities, personal care homes, assisted living, independent living and home health.



Candace most recently served as VP of Operations for a non-profit organization and oversaw five CCRCs located in Pennsylvania and Maryland, caring for more than 2,000 residents with an annual operating budget in excess of \$130M. Her degrees from Pennsylvania State University include a BS in Nursing and a Master of Health Administration. She holds certifications as a Registered Nurse, Nursing Home Administrator, Certified Legal Nurse Consultant and Certified Nursing Director Long Term Care.

She serves as Executive Director/Board Chair of the Pennsylvania Directors of Nursing Association and recently finished tenure as Secretary of the LeadingAge MD board. She is also a member of the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association, American Nurses Association and National Association of Certified Legal Nurse Consultants.

Garet Weston, Vice President of Operational Finance

Garet had served as a Financial Consultant with Affinity from 2016 to 2019 and a Finance Director from 2013 until his promotion in 2016. He returns to take the helm as Vice President Operational Finance. Garet's depth in senior living finance is broad and his ability to take the lead role at Affinity is a significant asset to our clients.

He has acquired extensive experience in financial management including financial statement preparation, budgeting, payroll, cost reporting, third-party billing and internal auditing. Additionally, Garet has a unique knowledge in multiple customized software systems, accounts receivable management and managing third-party audits. Garet will be leading a team of financial consultants, accountants, billing specialists and finance directors within the Affinity network.



Garet has his Master's in Business Workforce and Development from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting from Clarion University of Pennsylvania. He is a certified USA swim coach and currently serves as the Indiana High School Head Swim Coach. Additionally Garet is very active in Relay for Life, Make a Wish Foundation and is a volunteer football coach.

Learn more about these team members and the entire management staff on our website at affinityhealthservices.net/staff-profiles

By Candace McMullen, Executive Vice President of Consulting and Business Development

One year ago, our country was beginning to realize the impact of COVID-19 on daily life. Limitations on travel, remote work, mask wearing, social distancing, and quarantines were just a few of the newest introductions to life as we knew it.

We have moved through the green, yellow and red zones more times than we can count. The media portrayed us as heroes and as villains. Through it all, our only focus has been the safety of our residents, staff, and families. Nine months after we closed our doors to visitation, we found ourselves coordinating vaccination clinics! Finally, an end is in sight. We seem to be in the final step and cautiously optimistic that a different life was on the horizon and we would emerge from pandemic management and into “normal” operations.

Revenue and Occupancy Building Strategies

Establishing occupancy improvement plans and using different marketing approaches from the past is a must. Public opinion of senior living providers is mixed. Those who resided in a community throughout the pandemic appear to be satisfied with their care and services. Residents and families who experienced the pandemic within our walls saw the effort and compassion of our team. Those who continue to live in the community at large but who may need our service in the future do not share the same perspective. Their sphere of influence is defined by the media.

We will rely on a collective effort will demonstrate to new consumers our facilities commitment, expertise, and safety conscious approach to caring for their VIP (very important person). We have to validate our solid performance and rebuild trust and confidence in our service to the community. Here's how:

- Encourage staff vaccination and set high targets for vaccination goals. Continuous education, using fact and dispelling fiction, and re-shifting the vaccine focus to our core mission of protecting residents are strategies that work. Utilize your QAPI knowledge and process to demonstrate robust vaccination programs.
- Evaluate your physical plant and utilize your available space in the most safe and efficient manner. With decreased occupancy, the opportunity to “right-size” your facility exists. Use this opportunity to evaluate your competitors, available beds, and community needs to reposition your facility for future success. Now is the perfect time to bring the marketing, clinical and finance expertise to the table in determining the right size for your facility.
- Incorporate your infection control improvements, such as ventilation and air exchange improvements and improved cleaning protocols in your marketing strategy.
- Evaluate your digital marketing presence and identify ways you can transform your online presence. Society's increased reliance on the internet makes it imperative that providers have a solid digital marketing plan.
- As the annual survey process resumes, it is important for you to demonstrate positive clinical outcomes and facility processes. With increased consumer reliance on the internet, your survey outcomes, while available online for quite some time, will take on a heightened level of importance for future consumers.
- A mock survey with an independent review of your clinical records, facility processes and physical plant can assist providers with both maintaining regulatory compliance as well as marketing consumers. Pay close attention to infection control processes for staff compliance particularly in light of the

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REBUILDING TRUST AS WE EMERGE FROM A NATIONAL PANDEMIC

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increased enforcement for repeat infection control citations. Infection control citations not only impact consumer trust but will likely result in increasing civil monetary penalties depending on a provider's history.

- Evaluate your local market providers, both upstream and downstream and align your organization with solid performers offering a variety of services. Establish a team goal to be the nursing facility provider of choice within your provider network.
- The shift from RUG IV to Patient Driven Payment Model (PDPM) occurred just months before the pandemic started without sufficient time for providers to understand the new system and monitor their payment experience. An audit of your clinical records can help you identify if you are managing your Medicare reimbursement processes both for optimization and compliance.

We have been collectively knocked down by the pandemic. Together, we must rise to again earn that trust and to serve our community.

STABILIZING SOLUTIONS IN THE WAKE OF THE COVID-19 FINANCIAL STRAIN

By Candace McMullen, Executive Vice President of Consulting and Business Development

The COVID-19 impact to the senior living industry was dramatic. We have paid the price both figuratively and financially. Our staff worked daily to respond to the changing guidance, communicate process changes, procure PPE, provide meaningful resident life activities and coordinate remote visitation opportunities. We worked diligently to keep COVID out of our facilities and then shifted to managing the devastation of outbreaks.

As senior living providers begin to emerge from the toughest battles of our careers, we find ourselves in a very different place than a year ago. While the target may have shifted, the battle is far from over. Significant occupancy challenges and increased costs for staffing and PPE have created major financial strain. Providers received state and federal grants, but the amount was less than what was needed to compensate providers for the full COVID impact. There is widespread fear throughout the industry of continuing catastrophic impact.

At the one-year anniversary, we continue moving forward with so many unknowns. Will COVID continue to morph into variants uncaptured in the existing vaccinations? How much longer will we need to absorb the additional PPE and testing costs? Will we see further relief grants to help sustain operations? There are still uncertainties, we must refocus our attention and efforts to areas that we can impact for stabilization.

Expense Reduction Strategies

- Now is a great time to refocus on accounts receivable. COVID disruptions, quarantines, and isolation have impacted business office functions. A deep dive into your accounts receivable will give you confidence in your billing processes or identify opportunities for improvement that will directly result in better cash flow. This is an area of operations often overlooked but with significant impact, both good and bad.
- With decreased occupancy, historical staffing patterns might be too costly to maintain. Make sure your facility is staffing to census and care needs. Monitor your hours per patient day judiciously as labor is the majority of any provider's operating costs. Do not overlook your ancillary department staffing for opportunities for cost savings. At 50-70% occupancy, the same number of activities staff, social workers, dietary staff, etc. are likely unnecessary. All vacant positions should be reviewed.

By addressing the facts before us, we can modify operations. These are necessities, some of which are unpleasant. We can remain hopeful that, one day, these adjustments will be looked back upon this time from a stronger and more stable perspective.

REVAMPED WEBSITE WILL ADDRESS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

By Mike Morlacci, Digital Media Marketing Specialist

Affinity Health Services Inc.'s revised website will take a proactive approach to reaching potential partners as an optimized business-to-business gateway. AffinityHealthServices.net will launch during spring of 2021.

The name will not change, but the strategic approach will. The new methodology will offer subtle and stark enhancements to search engine optimization, deep content, blogging and accessibility. According to WebFX.com, an effective SEO strategy prompts a 50- to 70-percent increase in web traffic.

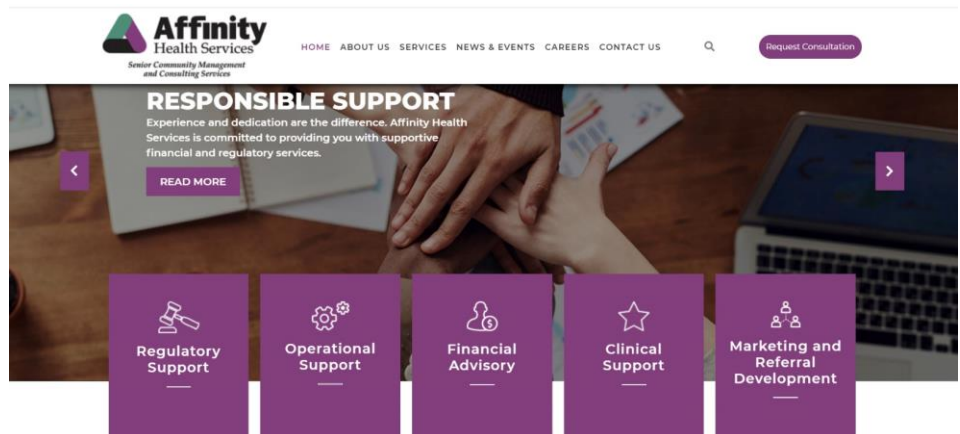
The website will be a main source for those seeking a consulting ally in management of nursing and rehabilitation centers, personal care facilities, independent living communities and continuing care retirement communities.

The revamped website will act as an online reference for services and will present a means for making a facility operate better and at a higher level. This gateway to potential and current partners will reinforce Affinity's standing as a leader in health care management and consulting.

Services will include company pillars:

- Regulatory Support
- Operational Support
- Financial Advisory
- Clinical Support
- Marketing and Referral Development

There will be landing pages devoted to specialty areas such as Directed In-Service Training.



Affinity's team of experts and their reliable and consistent record of success, will be just a few clicks away.

No matter the situation, this website will be a means of connecting a business to Affinity's experienced consultants for appropriate education, plan development, assessments and improved operational processes.

IN THE NEXT EDITION OF THE AFFINITY ADVANTAGE NEWSLETTER:

- COVID-19 vaccinations and continued diligence
- The return to a normal post-pandemic world
- Meet new members of Affinity Health Services
- Upcoming events



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