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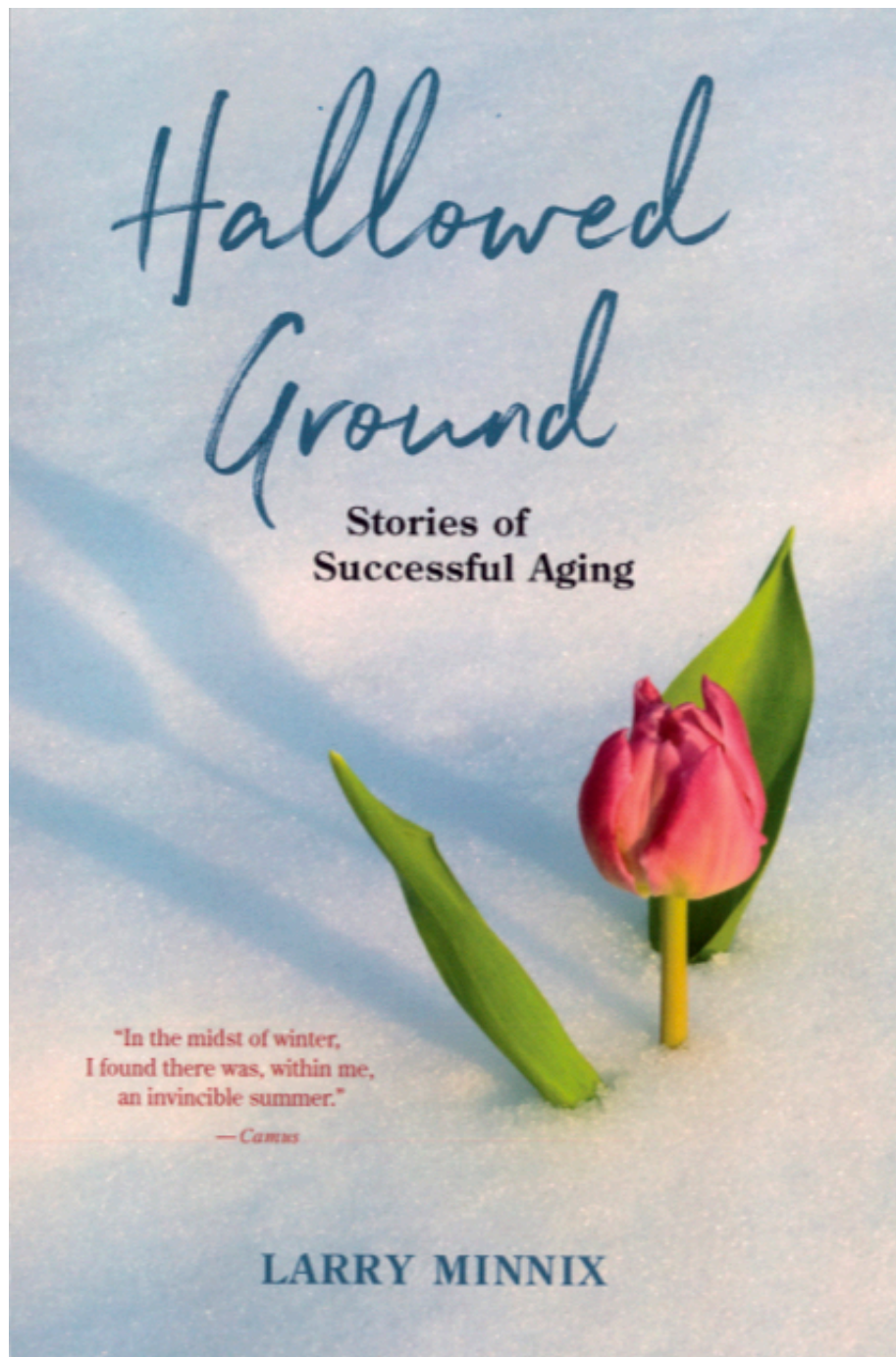


September 1, 2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to play out, we wanted to take a moment to remind each of us that despite this crisis, it is the ***continuing heroic acts by people like you*** that **give us all hope** for a brighter future and a hastened end to this difficult healthcare situation.

To help us bear in mind these stories of successes, this month we are revisiting an article from last year's newsletter archive which highlights many examples of these triumphs in the face of adversity as compiled by author Larry Minnix. Please enjoy and remember that you make a difference everyday!

- *Note: You can revisit past newsletters by visiting the [Solutions Newsletter Archive](#) to view the 20 most recent emails.*



Clint Maun recently interviewed his long-time friend and colleague **Larry Minnix**, formerly head of *LeadingAge* (national) and a major figurehead in the field of aging services, regarding his new book, *Hallowed Ground: Stories of Successful Aging*. We wanted to share that interview with all of you in an effort to help promote this uplifting compendium of positive stories on aging to better reflect and promote the amazing work and results being celebrated at aging services providers across the country.

You can [listen to the interview or read the transcript](#) to learn more about this inspiring book. We encourage all of you to read this wonderful book and be reminded that we are all responsible for sharing our success stories to help improve healthcare for everyone!

The book is available for purchase on [Amazon in paperback and e-book formats](#). If you have questions or comments for Larry Minnix, you can contact him at:

- [202-236-1355](tel:202-236-1355)
- larryminnix@gmail.com



The Leading Edge

Pandemic Best Practices: Tips & Strategies to Consider

As you're probably already aware, when COVID-19 infiltrated the U.S., a nursing center in Washington state became one of the country's first COVID hotspots. At that moment, many healthcare professionals realized that long-term care and skilled nursing facilities are particularly vulnerable to this terrible disease. Although there's still so much to learn about this virus, most healthcare professionals do know that the post-acute care community needs a solid strategy to combat this enemy.

As your organization continues to battle the pandemic, it's important (and wise) to leverage the learnings and success stories of facilities across the country. Indeed, some facilities have rapidly implemented effective new protocols and practices which have led to reduced risk and exposure.

Here's a look at some best practices that you may find helpful on the front lines of the pandemic.

- **Aim for quick and easy access to information and facts to ensure everyone is on the same page.** No doubt about it, having quick and easy access to accurate information is vital when dealing with any crisis. To this end, it's critical for staff and clinicians to receive near-daily briefings on the pandemic and how it's impacting your facility. To provide optimal care, staff needs access to the same set of facts that shed light on proven ways to limit the virus's spread, and the best medical strategies for treating patients. Ensure this information and resources are made available to your entire staff, without limitation. Doing so makes everything much easier and smoother because everyone is operating from the same database of clinical information.
- **Keep staff limited to one to two facilities.** We now know that asymptomatic healthcare staff can inadvertently spread the virus, and this is only compounded if they visit multiple facilities. Aim to keep staff limited to specific facilities to help minimize this risk. For example, a clinician who may usually work in five or six facilities should be re-assigned to just one or two.
- **Double down on partnerships.** Limiting the spread of COVID-19 requires close partnerships between facilities and local hospitals. Collaborate with your local hospitals to ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. This way, when issues arise, each clinician or facility knows exactly who to reach out to at their assigned hospital partner in order to get the resources they need. As an added benefit of these partnerships, you can expect these relationships to

strengthen and flourish even after we move past the pandemic.

As states continue to reopen, the risk of spread and exposure will undoubtedly rise. That's why it's crucial to strictly abide by the measures and strategies you've put in place. Letting your guard down or letting even one or two processes to slip can have dire consequences. Continued vigilance is critical.

*"When one door of happiness closes, another opens;
but often we look so long at the closed door that
we do not see the one which has been opened for us."*

—Helen Keller



Employees Matter

Many Facilities Still Short on Testing, PPE, Despite New Program & Funding

The White House recently announced that U.S. nursing homes that participate in Medicare and Medicaid will be getting a \$5 billion infusion of provider relief funds from the Department of Health and Human Services. The program is aimed to help with testing, purchasing personal protective equipment, and hiring additional staff.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services also announced that they will begin requiring, rather than just recommending, that all nursing homes in states with a five percent positivity rate or higher test all nursing home staff each week. According to CMS, more than 15,000 testing devices will be deployed over the next few months to help support this mandate. Funds from the Provider Relief Fund can also be used to pay for additional testing of visitors. CMS, in partnership with the CDC, is rolling out a self-paced, on-demand online nursing home COVID-19 training focused on infection control and best practices to help mitigate virus spread in their facilities. **The training is a requirement for nursing homes to receive additional funding from the Provider Relief Fund Program and will be available for all 15,400 nursing homes nationwide.** Specialized technical assistance will also be available to nursing homes found to have infection prevention deficiencies in their most recent CMS inspection and have recorded recent COVID-19 cases based upon their data submissions to CDC.

Despite these relief measures, many facilities are still coming up short when it comes to PPE and testing capacity. According to a recent report from the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), nursing homes in several states continue to have less than a one-week's supply of personal protective equipment (PPE). Using data from Johns Hopkins University, AHCA/NCAL compiled a state-by-state breakdown of the positive COVID-19 test rate and number of nursing homes in those states.

Data released by CMS also aligns with the AHCA/NCAL report. According to the CMS data, many states still have a significant percentage of facilities without vital PPE,

including N95 masks, surgical masks, and gowns.

Stay Vigilant & Ask these Questions

Although it appears funding and help is on the way, many facilities still lack essential equipment and testing required to fight this pandemic. Your facility needs to stay vocal and vigilant to ensure you receive the essential equipment you need. Below are some questions and investigations your facility can conduct to make sure you're receiving needed aid.

- Are other local facilities receiving adequate PPE and testing kits? Are they receiving less or more than your facility?
- There's been some reports on facilities having serious problems with PPE delivered from FEMA. Did your local facility receive faulty gear?
- Some facilities have reported extensive delays in testing turnaround time—what does testing turnaround look like at your facility?
- Has your facility begun to allow visitors? Do you have the screening and protections in place to safely accommodate for visitors? Have you documented a rollback plan if cases spike?

Asking these types of questions can help you identify where issues and gaps have emerged, and more importantly, you can get on track to start addressing them immediately.

*"If we have the attitude that it's going to be a great day, it usually is."
—Catherine Pulsifier*



News You Can Use

New Spanish Study Showcases Positive COVID-19 Outcomes among Residents

A recent study published in the *Journals of Gerontology* found that on-site *medicalization programs* significantly improved survival rates and reduced hospital referrals in four Spanish nursing homes during COVID-19 outbreaks.

The study's authors cite that the program was organized around ten key processes and interventions with the goals of reducing COVID-deaths and hospital transfers. They also focused on offering *humanistic palliative care* to residents in their natural environment. The four facilities received special attention in the areas of medical equipment, staffing, universal testing, separation of contaminated and uncontaminated areas, epidemiological surveying, and protocols for distinguishing active or palliative care approaches.

Here's some key findings that resulted from the study:

- More than half of the homes' 457 residents (59%) received diagnoses of COVID-19 during the study.
- Nearly all (97%) either survived or had an *optimal* palliative care experience.
- This is compared with 77% of residents who were diagnosed with the disease before the medicalized program was put in place.
- There also was a significant decrease in hospital referrals for COVID-19-positive residents compared with referrals before the program began (29% versus 17%).

The study's authors said they believe that a medicalized program not only improves COVID-19 outcomes, but also ensures rigorous, but also humanistic and gentle, care to residents.

*"Smart people learn from everything and everyone,
average people from their experiences,
stupid people already have all the answers."
—Socrates*



Just For Fun

A Little Office Humor

Here are some silly jokes about work that are likely to make you chuckle!

My boss told me to stop acting like a flamingo, so I had to put my foot down.

Boss to employees: "We will continue to have these 2-hour meetings every single day until I work out why no work is being done!"

Why did the doughnut maker retire? He was tired of the hole business!

Business is up and down at the moment; I sell yo-yos.

My boss is very easygoing. He told me not to think of him as the boss, rather, think of him as a friend who is never wrong.

I don't like to complain about the customer service of any business, but I didn't appreciate being pushed over by the banker when I asked him to check my balance.



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