



SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
**Department of Disability
and Aging Services**

Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Skilled Nursing Facility Residents in San Francisco: *Project Presentation Preview for Behavioral Health Work Group*

**by Carley Clemons, Consultant
UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy**





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Findings



Survey/Interview Findings:

Impacts of the Pandemic on LTC Residents of SNFs

“Three people on my unit have died because of lack of visitors, a screen isn’t the same. They couldn’t see their important people and they died earlier than they had to.”

-SNF Director of Nursing Services

“They want us to stay in our rooms... it drives me nuts, its just the same old stuff every day.”

- SNF Resident

“One man told me that he might as well not live because he hasn’t seen his family in so long. Depression and despair seem to be increasing significantly”

- Advocate for Nursing Home Reform

“I don’t think anybody is the same. Residents are experiencing functional decline based on being in their rooms for so much time. They have a new normal now.”

-SNF Director of Social Services



Research Findings:

Resident Needs Exceed Caregiving Staff Capacity

In a 2020 nationwide survey of nursing home Registered Nurses, **72%** reported missing at least one necessary care task in their most recent shift due to a lack of time and/ or resources.

In the site-specific survey conducted at one San Francisco SNF only about half of residents agreed with the statements:

“I am able to get help right away if needed”

&

“Staff respond quickly when I ask for assistance.”

Less than one third agreed with the statement:

“I can have a bath or shower as often as I wish”

Survey/Interview Findings: The Pandemic as an Opportunity for Improvement

“All of a sudden they [SNF residents] became a huge focus because so many of them were dying [from COVID-19], they weren’t a focus before, and I am hoping that they stay in the limelight a while longer. We need to continue to focus on areas that affect the elderly.”

-SNF Director of Social Services





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Recommendations



1. Sweeping Overhaul of the Status Quo

- Improved caregiving staff ratios
- Increased Medi-Cal & Medicare reimbursement rates for mental health practitioners
- Decreased reliance on psychotropic medications in favor of access to therapeutic interventions
- Increased presence of registered nurses in SNFs
- Addressing the very high rates of caregiving staff turnover

2. Standardize Person-Centered Care

- Quality of life should be understood as specific to each person
- People served should be treated with empathy, sensitivity, and acceptance
- Person-centered care is expected to be the norm
- Associated with:
 - Significant improvement in residents' feelings of helplessness and boredom.
 - Increased job satisfaction for staff and improved capacity to positively meet residents' needs

3. Advocate for Safe Resumption of Social Engagement Activities

- Due to high vaccination rates and loosening public health restrictions, many SNFs are “re-opening”
- Some SNFs remain hesitant
- Presents an opportunity to advocate for resumption and development of social engagement activities.



4. Promote Evidence-Based On-Site Therapeutic Practices

- Telephonic Outreach
- Life Review Groups
- Group, Individual, Staff Therapy (GIST)
- Behavioral Health Activities Intervention (BE-ACTIV)

5. Train Caregiving Staff on Mental Health & Trauma Informed Care

- Variety of staff members in SNFS who have intimate contact with residents provide an opportunity for recognition and response to residents' mental health needs
- Programs that emphasize mental health training for staff have demonstrated significant improvement in detection and response to residents' symptoms of depression
 - Trauma Informed Care would be particularly salient after the events of the last year



6. Ensure Tele-Connectivity for All Residents Who are Able to Benefit

- Tele-connectivity can serve as a bridge for some SNF residents to loved ones, healthcare providers, and the larger communities generally
- There are access considerations
- Unlikely that tele-connectivity can be generalized to all SNF residents
- San Francisco is a hub of the technology sector
 - Potential for partnerships to support tele-connectivity for SNF residents



Questions?

Action Items & Next Steps

1. Incorporate recommendations as they relate to LTCCC Policy Agenda and endorse a letter to the State with report & recs
2. Socialize report findings (Gov's Office/Master Plan on Aging, CDA, SF State Delegation, CCC, MO, BOS)
3. Incorporate report findings into the local Master Plan Local Policy Playbook
4. Support any State/Federal bills which address Status-Quo Issues (Medi-Cal reimbursement rates for mental health providers)
 - Staffing issues (i.e. caregiving ratios, high turnover rates)
 - Digital divide among community dwelling, ALF and LTC residents

Action Items & Next Steps

6. Pursue pilots, partners, and funding to plan & launch Evidence-Based On-Site Therapeutic Practices
 - Training for Caregiving Staff on Mental Health & Trauma Informed Care
 - Ensuring Reliable Internet Access at all SNFs and devices for (some) Residents
7. Identify ways to Support Safe Resumption of Social Engagement Activities (e.g. new health guidance and CCC oversight)