



## Senior Living 100 Coronavirus Task Force Executive Summary – Call #7

### *Beyond the Surge: Envisioning the New Normal & Rebuilding Your Census*

*April 29, 2020*

Our complimentary Senior Living 100 Coronavirus Task Force Calls offer best practices from leading operators on responding to the pandemic and forward-thinking insights into the “new normal,” including how to operate in the next 12-18 months before a vaccine is developed.

#### **Featured Contributors:**

**Anja Rogers**, CEO, Senior Star

**Steve Fleming**, CEO, The Well Spring Group

**Severine Petras**, CEO, Priority Life Care

**Kris Ward**, VP Operations, Dial Senior Living

**Pilar Carvajal**, CEO, Innovation Senior Management

#### **Key Learnings:**

##### **Overview**

As the surge subsides, leading operators are shifting from crisis mode to a return-to-business, and are formulating strategies around key issues like visitation policies and building census. With states reopening, there is renewed trepidation over potential staff infection, specifically from contact with people outside of the community. Operators are also focused on ensuring staff maintain strict infection control protocols within their communities, and are emphasizing adherence to CDC and state guidelines in all processes moving forward.

##### **Occupancy Levels**

COVID has had a mixed effect on occupancy, with most operators reporting relatively flat levels. **Anja Rogers** (Senior Star) is projecting to be down by 60 units by June 1 (out of 2,200) and says it will take about 16 months to return to pre-COVID occupancy. Across the industry, move-ins have slowed or ceased depending on location, with strict isolation protocols in place for communities that are allowing move-ins. **Steve Fleming** (The Well Spring Group) commented on the stabilization of their CCRC product with pent up demand in independent living. Tours have also slowed down, which will impact future move-ins.

##### **Visitation Policy**

Visitation will remain a major challenge to infection control for the foreseeable future. **Severine Petras** (Priority Life Care) expressed the need for constantly testing move-ins, staff and visitors. It is also



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imperative to ensure your staff is only working at your facility and that you are monitoring vendors entering the community. **Kris Ward** (Dial Senior Living) echoed the challenges of visitation and reiterated the need for continued social distancing and outdoor visits.

### Repositioning

As the media perpetuates a negative view of the industry, operators highlighted the importance of human connection and first-person storytelling to share what life was like for residents during the COVID crisis. **Pilar Carvajal** (Innovation Senior Management) discussed repositioning from “quality of care” to “quality of life,” and **Severine Petras** cited a newly-formed charity ([People of Seniors Housing](#)) designed to build up the image of senior living. LeadingAge also hired a PR firm to create positive messaging for the industry as a whole.

### Economic Outlook

Despite relatively flat occupancy numbers for now, operators agreed there is mixed messaging in the economy. Some suggested independent living (want-based) is more vulnerable than assisted living and memory care (need-based). Others are saying lenders are more lenient than in the past due to the shutdown, even though construction has slowed. There is also concern over affordability, particularly among those out of work (one operator recounted a case where an adult child took their parent out of a facility due to financial distress).

### ■ [Senior Living 100 COVID-19 Business Planning & Crisis Management Resources](#)

To receive an invitation to participate in task force calls, please contact:

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#### *2020/2021 Conferences*

[HL](#)  
November 1-2, 2020  
*(NEW DATES)*  
Westin Chicago River North

[Senior Care 360](#)  
December 9-10, 2020  
*(NEW DATES)*  
Gaylord Resort, MD

[Senior Living 100](#)  
March 14-17, 2021  
JW Marriott Miami Turnberry, FL