ICAA COVID-19 Task force releases report to forge path towards “next normal” for senior living

White paper contains 35 strategies and tactics to maintain safety and reinvigorate lifestyles for older adults living in age-restricted communities and apartments

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (PRWEB) August 13, 2020 -- In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) brought together 154 thought leaders—providers of housing and services for older adults—to create strategies and tactics to help all segments of the senior living industry emerge from being locked down.

Developed by members of the ICAA COVID-19 Senior Living Task Force, the strategies and tactics are collected in the white paper, “Creating a path towards the next normal in senior living.”

“The leadership and staff in all types of senior living communities—active adult, independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing, and memory care—immediately took action to protect the health of their residents when the pandemic appeared, and sprang into action to deliver meals, meaningful activities and programs to keep everyone connected to family and friends,” said task force organizer Colin Milner, CEO of International Council on Active Aging. “Yet, we realized that the future for older adults and senior living organizations depends on keeping residents safe today, while envisioning tomorrow’s safe home, services and lifestyle amenities.”

The ICAA COVID-19 Senior Living Task Force members were especially concerned that the general public has not been educated on the distinct differences among types of senior living options (active adult, independent living, assisted living) and may believe all of them are “nursing homes.” In response, the task force members determined that strategies to update the value proposition of the many communities composing the senior living industry aligned with actions to develop a culture of positive aging, which promotes the health and well-being of older adults.

The strategies and tactics developed by members of the task force are intended to trigger actions that individual organizations can take. Underneath each strategy there are tactics and tasks that reflect what organizations can do today, and what they could do to prepare for the midterm and longterm lifestyles necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Download “Creating a path towards the next normal in senior living” at https://www.icaa.cc//listing.php?type=white_papers

The six strategies can apply to many types of organizations:

1. Design, re-design and/or renovate exteriors and interiors of buildings. The value of transitioning indoor and outdoor spaces to enable physical distancing and innovative service delivery is suggested, along with identification of infrastructure and renovations that combine healthy approaches with preparation for potential emergencies.

2. Develop purpose-driven, caring, passionate staff. Because staff members are valuable contributors to the workplace culture and the lives of older adults, there is a
collection of options for organizational structures, professional growth and recognition.

3. Provide technology to increase connections, aid efficiency and optimize health.
   The pandemic caused an immediate, wholehearted shift to delivering messages, programs and health care through in-house portals, telehealth, and internet services. Ideas for implementation assume that will likely be a future need.

4. Develop the culture of positive aging, framed by all the dimensions of wellness.
   Approaches to counteract stereotypical attitudes toward older adults and reset organizational priorities are offered, based in a philosophy of helping residents be as independent as possible and engaged in the life of their communities.

5. Establish trust by being prepared to respond to emergencies and unexpected events.
   One aspect of the value of senior living is the ability of organizations to be prepared to immediately respond to an emergency, and to be transparent in communicating the status of residents and staff.

6. Update perceptions to reinforce the new value proposition of each type of senior living.
   Ideas for wording and stories that organizations can use to relay how the lives of residents were protected during the pandemic while services continued to be delivered, with a call to educate the public about the differences among types of properties.

The need to immediately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically affected the operations of all senior living organizations, whether active adult or life plan or urban apartment complex. Now that the first months of the pandemic are over, leaders, funders, investors, residents and families are looking to the future: what will life in a senior living community look like next year, or in three years, or in ten?

Members of the ICAA COVID-19 Senior Living Task Force believe that by combining the expertise of national societies and associations, senior living organizations and industry suppliers, the “senior living” model will survive and flourish in the post-COVID-19 world, thus providing the place where older adults can enthusiastically engage in life.

ICAA COVID-19 Senior Living Task Force
Purpose, Commitment, Clarity
https://www.icaa.cc/covid19response/task_force.htm

The ICAA COVID-19 Senior Living Task Force generates ideas, strategies, tactics and messaging that organizations can consider, now and in the future, when planning the next model of senior living that optimizes the health and well-being of older adults and team members, and reinvigorates the value proposition of senior living. The ICAA COVID-19 Senior Living Task Force includes representatives of for-profit, not-for-profit, and affordable housing—organizations providing active-adult and independent living, continuing care/life plan communities, assisted living, long-term care, skilled nursing and rehabilitation along with representatives from the industry associations and the suppliers that support their work.

Organizer: International Council on Active Aging (ICAA)
www.icaa.cc
ICAA is a professional association that leads, connects and defines the active-aging industry and supports professionals who aspire to develop wellness cultures for adults over 50. This support includes creating
wellness environments, programs and services. The association is focused on active aging—an approach to aging that helps older adults live life as fully as possible within all dimensions of wellness—and provides its members with education, information, resources and tools. As an active-aging educator and advocate, ICAA has advised numerous organizations and governmental bodies.
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Online Web 2.0 Version
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