ICAA® Forum 2020

Future-proof your senior living community

Summary and action report

Presented by International Council on Active Aging

January 2021

About the ICAA Forum

The ICAA Forum brings together thought leaders from many organizations—both private and public—to form a think tank that develops strategies to turn the challenges facing senior living providers into opportunities. Launched in 2005, the meetings forge connections among industry leaders while promoting understanding and cohesive action around the ultimate goal: health and quality of life as people age.

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About International Council on Active Aging

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 that helps older adults live 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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Wellness is derived from our ability to understand, accept and act upon our capacity to lead a purpose-filled and engaged life. In doing so, we can embrace our potential (physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social, environmental, vocational) to pursue and optimize life's possibilities.

Source: International Council on Active Aging

Building the new models of communities for older adults

"I think the pandemic has taught us to work in collaboration with communities that have been competitors in the past. We all have come together to work through this."

Angie Frantz, Product Manager, Expressions, Prestige Senior Living

All the communities in senior living have been caught up by the tornado of issues that arrived on their doorsteps along with the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergency that disrupted business as usual is months old now, but the issues themselves are current.

Coming out of this disruption, the next models of senior living need to be future-proofed, meaning the philosophy and infrastructure of the organization are built for resilience, able to withstand the stresses that will inevitably impact operations. The purpose of the thought leaders who gathered during the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) Forum 2020 think tank was to sketch the framework that will become the next normal of housing and services for older adults.

Future-proof: The philosophy and infrastructure of the organization are resilient, framed to withstand the stresses that will inevitably impact operations.

While most communities remain immersed in providing services while controlling the spread of the coronavirus, leadership and staff are rethinking the community's operations since the situations that were in need of change are now priorities for action: staffing shortages, siloed departments, bad reputation, lack of differentiation among properties, challenging building designs and lack of investment in wellness.

To prioritize the issues, discussions focused on four areas that are key to all organizations:

- The built and unbuilt environment
- Technology integration
- Workforce quality, growth and retention
- Wellness culture and lifestyle

Exploring the "tomorrow" of senior living

Today, the term "senior living" refers to planned, age-restricted communities (generally, 55 or 65 years and older) with residences and services for people who live independently or need assistance with daily activities or health care. These communities typically are divided according to the services and amenities being provided: independent living, assisted living, memory care or nursing care. Real estate targeted to people 50 years and older can be thought of as senior living, although these developments do not have the services provided by age-restricted communities, such as meals and transportation, included in their fees. Long-term care nursing or rehabilitation settings

are not the same as most senior living campuses, although similar services may be provided.

The question that has hung in the background of senior living over the past years was raised again during the ICAA Forum discussions: Is there even a place for "senior living" campuses in the future, since the younger boomer and Gen X generations don't understand current models, are not attracted to them and may not be able to afford senior living as it stands today?

The consensus among Forum colleagues was that yes, there is a role for older adult communities as long as new, relevant models emerge to ensure their viability and sustainability.

Provisions of services for older adults is the mission of many organizations, and that commitment remains. The rock-solid agreement among all think tank participants is that each community's operations will not return to prepandemic norms. Nor should they, because many positive changes took place amid the pivot to long-term emergency action.

What will communities of homes and services for older adults look like within the new models of living? The categories (and fee structures) of the current models will inevitably change. Perhaps a place to start is to consider the next term describing housing for older adults is based on lifestyle, services and features that aid functional ability. What is retired is the word "senior."

Dichotomies identify future imperatives

Sets of contrasting issues must be evaluated to prepare an organization for the future.

- Social connections are a key promise of senior living, yet safety during infectious disease events (flu, virus and such) means living alone with no or limited personal contact.
- Technology assists with connecting people and delivering some services, and technology separates people and inter-departmental functions.
- Technology enables remote health care and monitoring, yet augmenting telehealth and health care services at the property threatens the shift to a multidimensional wellness culture.
- Wellness, in all dimensions and delivered through every department, is a service desired by current and future residents, yet wellness staffing and programs are often cut when balancing budgets.

- Funding is provided to cover the cost of care during and after an illness, but little funding is available for prevention, a core principle of wellness and part of the value-based care approach in U.S. health care (NEJM Catalyst 2017).
- The business models of senior living rely on residents paying rent and fees for housing and services, but the housing and services that attract and retain residents were disrupted because of the pandemic and move-ins declined.
- The pandemic forced extreme changes to daily operations and staff roles, yet this broke down departmental silos and inspired collaboration and teamwork.
- Senior living communities compete among themselves and the larger community, yet competitors became allies sharing information, ideas and resources.

Thoughts for the future

"Are future residents/customers looking to influence and inform what their community looks like and what quality of life they will have? Does the company culture play a role in customer decision-making?"

Kelly Ording, Regional Director of Resident Programming, Watermark Retirement Communities

Inside and outside of senior living, the culture, vocabulary and beliefs of people circulate around the strategies framing new models of living for older adults. In particular, revenue streams rely on real estate and government or private health insurance, swerving the business of senior living to housing and health care. As a result, the confused consumer believes "senior living" or "retirement communities" are nursing homes or a place to stay out of everyone else's way.

The need to change the beliefs surrounding housing for older adults surfaced throughout the ICAA Forum discussions.

- Ageist stereotypes and vocabulary exist among the leadership and staff of communities, in the same way these are found among the residents and general population. Replace stereotypes of what older people can or cannot do, or should do, with a focus on functional ability instead of age. Support means aiding individual's highest level of capability. Recognize that older people are full-fledged adults, not overgrown children or people who need to be "fixed."

- The value proposition needs to be articulated and stated in a simple, clear way. Potential residents/clients do not know what communities offer, which influences the stereotypes of senior housing. Words like "senior" and "retirement" don't help. A person who is 76 and works part-time does not consider he or she is a senior or retired. One approach is to reconsider the organization's name once the new model is determined.

- An industrywide definition of wellness would help express the value proposition and reduce confusion. Even people in the industry use the word differently, which shows they don't know what it means (ICAA 2019). Reminder: Health care is a subcategory of wellness. A universal definition that describes the components of wellness would enable individual organizations to measure the results of the lifestyle with a few Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), giving strength to every organization in the industry when seeking funding, clients and resources (Wellness KPIs are in the ICAA/ProMatura Wellness Benchmarks, see Resources).

Unpacking "community" in senior living

Future-proofing means considering what is meant by "community." People are becoming accustomed to staying at home, and the boomer generation is not as interested in the housing options senior living often provides. Older adults can access services and amenities in their current homes at a rate that dramatically increased during the pandemic.
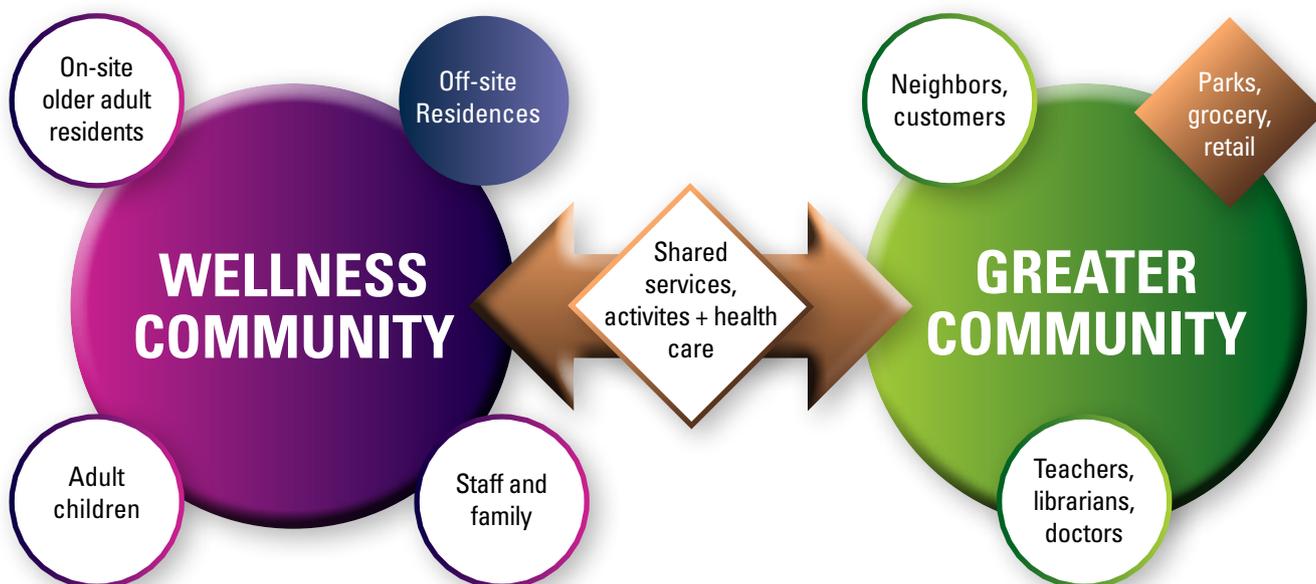
Is a senior living community inside four walls? Or, could resources be reallocated to position the senior living community as a recognized neighborhood of the larger community? Thinking beyond property lines opens up potential to make it easier to integrate amenities and services into community life, expanding offerings without having to provide the infrastructure. Inviting neighbors to share the services that are on-site, whether a restaurant or a fitness center, complements mission at the same time

it opens doors to potential new residents and revenue streams.

Opening up a community will be a shock to the culture and infrastructure of senior living. Some communities are located away from towns and cities; others promise safety by keeping their gates closed and guarded. Residents may not wish to share their amenities with non-residents. Future-proofing implies looking beyond today to what elements can sustain a community in five years, in 10 years. The pandemic's disruption cemented the notion that life will change, creating the opportunity to redefine "residents" and "amenities."

The ICAA Forum participants predict that being part of the larger community will be a much higher need for sustainability in the future.

New model of a wellness community
connected through relationships and technology

Thoughts for the future

- Aggregating data across all business segments and product lines would allow each organization to reasonably evaluate results. Ideally, with similar accounting methods, many communities could benchmark the impact of services and quality-of-life in addition to census. Technology companies must help with this by better understanding the business of older adult communities and demonstrating a willingness to be compatible with other technologies in use at the community.

- Acknowledge that all staff members are the people power behind ideas, problem-solving and getting the work done. Does everyone in the organization, including the board, investors, executives and managers respect and admire the CNAs who assist residents with the activities of daily living, like helping them eat and bathe? Are dining servers and housekeepers considered as important as the administrators? It can be easy to view these positions as an everlasting struggle of rotating staff who want a $1/hour raise, yet they are the reason independent living, assisted living, memory care and nursing function. More support for their needs could make a new business model flourish.

- Investment priorities must shift if new models are to be realized. Investment in innovation to rethink the habitual ways of business will be needed, perhaps with separate but equal teams for operations and innovation. To bring innovation to fruition, the right people and services need to be in place, which suggests that hierarchies and positions will be rewritten. Past policies of bankers and investors make funding sources a stumbling block, but these entities likewise changed because of the pandemic and may be open to new models.

A final question that rumbled through the ICAA Forum conversations was, why are we segregating our residents instead of making them part of the larger community? Through the meeting, the word "community" emerged as a broad concept that extended well beyond the walls of a building.

Future-proof the built and unbuilt environment

"Consider what senior living community means and what it looks like. Does it have to stay the way it has been, or can it morph into something more flexible? Is "community" threading together existing locations where people already live and not the ones we create?"

Megan Longley, Vice President Sales, Acts Retirement-Life Communities

Senior living communities are based in the built environment of residences, dining rooms and kitchens, offices, theaters, fitness centers and community halls. Surrounding these buildings is the unbuilt environment of outdoor landscaping, sidewalks and recreation areas, either on or off the campus. Future-proofing these environments means adapting the buildings and other property features, and looking outside the walls to the outdoor spaces.

Another aspect of future-proofing is considering who lives at a property, an issue that jumped from the back burner to the front of the stove because of the housing affordability crisis for staff members (plus the need to prevent workers from contracting coronavirus when they went home via public transportation) and for residents' family members facing similar affordability challenges.

Build for community connections. Form strong connections within the communities/towns that are home to residents and the senior living property. Open the campus and make facilities accessible to older adults in the larger community who live close enough to walk, drive or take public transportation. A robust interface with the larger community also serves a not-for-profit's commitment to public good while opening potential for cost sharing and revenue.

Reallocate buildings to include staff and family members as residents. Affordable housing in a separate wing or building can help solve the challenge of recruiting and retaining staff as well as provide another source of residents to maintain census. Keep "intergenerational" in mind. Cottages with in-law suites or communal-style homes with shared kitchen/common areas can be a home for residents and their adult children. For reduced rent, family members care for their loved one and when they need a break, the community provides support. These units can serve as affordable housing for staff and their families, which eases their

economic and travel burdens while benefitting staffing levels at the community.

Design for sustainability and cost control. Use sustainable building practices selected from a "green" perspective to help address climate change-related weather events and ultimately lower operational costs. Environmentally friendly housing also attracts like-minded staff and residents.

Design for well building interiors. In addition to good ventilation, ensure there is adequate light (adjustable to match circadian rhythms) and natural light, paying attention to sight lines and sound. Use environmentally friendly cleaning products and consider interior design and furnishings that are attractive and easy to clean or sanitize.

Plan space for internet shopping and deliveries. Residents are ordering online for clothes, food or other necessities; organizations are requesting deliveries instead of picking up supplies; restaurants are delivering meals. The standard mail room cubicle is not adequate to handle all the packages and deliveries. Make space for these.

Plan an accessible, open-space environment. Open floor plans allow for easy flow and flexibility of use and avoid the "locked in" feel. Plan gathering spaces (besides the lobby) where people can meet: multi-use common areas plus smaller places for more intimate activities. Relocate wellness service areas, such as fitness centers and recreation rooms, closer to the main public spaces (move out of the basement) for easy accessibility.

Plan for flexible function spaces. Design multi-purpose spaces that adapt quickly for appropriate services or needs. For example, a morning coffee bar converts to the chef's cooking demonstration in the afternoon and a full bar in the evening. Moveable, acoustic "air" walls divide larger spaces into smaller

Future-proof the built and unbuilt environment

rooms depending on the purpose. Built-in features, such as flip-up table tops, under-bench storage and a row of parallel bars attached to walls enables space to transition quickly from one purpose to another.

Incorporate no-touch features into buildings. Automatic doors and touchless fixtures like faucets or voice-activated television controls are easier for people with a functional impairment and help control touch-related disease transmission. Smart home installations for heating, lighting and appliances are additional no-touch aids.

Design a purpose-built virtual health care location. Prepare for different types of telehealth visits (medical visits, counseling,

health coach) with spaces equipped with blood pressure monitors, oxygen meters, etc. and easy access for nurses, along with comfortable and private options for counseling and health coach visits.

Build easy access to the outdoors. Prioritize patios and balconies. Design doors, windows and floor plans to allow convenient access to gardens, greenhouses and walking paths. Position access points to the outdoors at frequent intervals close to where residents live so they can easily move outside without walking long distances. Enclosed outdoor patio areas with resident monitoring systems enable all residents to come and go, regardless of cognitive ability.

Built and unbuilt environment		
Potential shocks & stressors	**What's possible to minimize**	
Customer is not attracted to senior living communities and will increasingly find ways to stay in their current communities.	Build a network with local resources that provides a two-way interaction between the community at large and older adult housing.	Invite the outside community to visit the community using town center or main street amenities and services that attract people from surrounding communities.
Power outages affect the internet and also shut down elevators, touchless systems (faucets, doors, speakers).	Plan delivery systems to all floors in a building for food, programs, supplies. Place stairs in strategic, accessible locations near service areas for staff use.	Install a "fail-safe" backup system so touchless doors, faucets and other fixtures operate in the event of a power failure.
Natural/man-made disasters: climate change-related weather events, floods, hurricanes, fires; new pandemics, illnesses, supply chain disruptions, active shooters.	Comprehensive disaster preparedness plans; evacuation plans. Supplies housed onsite; supply lines needed to implement plans are readily accessible.	Include wellness programs and emotional support options in disaster preparedness plans.
Financing remodels and new construction, cost of continuous upgrading of technology.	Show managed care organizations and Medicare Advantage programs it is to their advantage to cover cost of telehealth equipment.	Aggregate data to show how residents rate their physical, mental and emotional health better than, and are at lower risk of illness than, individuals who do not live at senior living/assisted living properties.

Future-proof technology integration

"We thrive on good intentions, but often fail to capture real data that matters to the customer."

John Cochrane, President and CEO, HumanGood

Technology has rapidly become the go-to for connecting staff, residents and families; indeed, connecting to the world outside of the community, whether a college lecture or a doctor. Many types of technology have been available prior to the pandemic, and tech companies are confident that their solutions will fill a need in senior living.

From the organization's point of view, the abundance of technologies means sorting out what will be most effective given a property's current and future infrastructure and needs. Overall, considerations are that software and/or hardware:

- serves a purpose and has a demonstrable benefit for residents, staff and community operations,
- has a current or potential ability to connect with other systems the organization has in place (interoperability),
- is user-friendly and simple enough to encourage adoption, and
- has a reporting function that provides information on usage and utility.

An interface or platform that enables different systems to communicate with one another would be a big boost to senior living. The ability to aggregate data from all systems in a useful dashboard and benchmarking report would allow for realistic business decisions and aid offsite providers and staff from all functional areas in sharing information for the good of residents and the community.

Residents and their families will expect they can virtually connect to one another, and to services and medical services.

Technology will remain a key part of the infrastructure of an organization, whether inside of properties or as a pathway to interface with the larger community.

Plan for future demand. During and after the pandemic, residents and their families will expect they can virtually connect to one another, and to services and medical support. Broadband internet in all areas of a building, devices such as smart televisions, tablets and phones will be the norm. Rooms with smart utilities, remote monitoring, voice-activated systems and in-house channels will be expected, with appropriate adaptations for people needing assistance.

Plan for personal and personalized technologies. Wearable devices, like motion-detecting wristwatches, pedometers and heart rate monitors are mainstream technologies. Personalized medicine with elements such as direct-to-consumer genetic testing and blood pressure readings sent to physicians through telehealth will become more popular and need to be accounted for in technology plans.

Design infrastructure for technology. Ensure all rooms in a building and outdoor spaces have equal access to electricity, internet and communication systems so connections are available throughout the community. Invite residents to comfortable, tech-enabled common spaces with tools for connection, education and projects (like coffee shops with wi-fi) to preserve a sense of community as opposed to technology isolating residents in their separate apartments.

Establish a technology evaluation process. With so many technologies emerging, aimed at different functions in an organization, it can become overwhelming for staff and Information Technology departments. Develop a process to evaluate potential technologies with criteria and, importantly, input from everyone who will eventually

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Future-proof technology integration

interact with the technology. With the rapid development in technology, it is important to stay current. (See Resources for the technology white paper with an evaluation checklist.)

Evaluate mainstream off-the-shelf technology. Consumer products from Apple, Microsoft, Google and other suppliers are familiar to residents, families and staff. Because these are common, families give them to current residents and future residents will arrive with them. Families and peers can help teach new users, which lessens the support needed from staff.

Upskill and support a tech-capable staff. Provide time and resources for training beyond internet-only help modules so that staff are competent in a program they will use and understand how it will benefit them. Monitor staff's adoption of technology and when usage is low, discover why and what is needed so software and hardware is used.

Upskill and support tech-capable residents and families. Implement technology that is simple and easy to use, supporting users with knowledgeable peers and a dedicated staff concierge. Place a "tech hub" booth centrally in the common

area, staffed with experts or upskilled resident, where residents, families and staff can bring questions and learn how to use unfamiliar equipment or troubleshoot a problem.

Adjust staff workflow to allow for technology. Before adding technology-assisted processes to ease workloads, adjust nursing and caregiver workflows to accommodate the transition. Plan for extra time needed when staff assist memory-impaired residents with the technology they use to communicate with family and friends.

Recognize the need to unplug from technology. Access to technology solutions is important, and equally important is time to disconnect for a walk, to read a book, paint or get a good night's sleep. Some residents will choose not to use available technologies and their preferences should be respected. Backup systems to address technology failures are another aspect of being unplugged.

Technology integration		
Potential shocks & stressors	**What's possible to minimize**	
Staff and residents do not use or are not trained in how to use technology.	Assign a tech concierge person or team to support staff, families and residents, including residents with vision or hearing impairments.	Form a technology advisory committee to evaluate the product including residents and staff who will use it.
Inability to aggregate all of the data we currently have into a useful system to analyze it.	Collaborate with organizations in other industries that compile data from multiple sources, e.g., managed care, to investigate models that may apply to senior living.	Work with vendors to suggest solutions and provide examples of how their technology can interface with others.
Natural/man-made disasters impacting technology: power outages, internet or broadband outages, ransomware attacks, data breeches, hacking.	Electrical backup system, e.g., generators in all buildings; incorporate manual back-up systems that do not rely on power to keep needed services functioning.	Acquire best practice security systems, monitored and upgraded by IT and security professionals.

Future-proof workforce quality, growth and retention

"Lessen workforce challenges by creating a place where people want to work, and where they have autonomy and opportunities to be creative and to be heard."

Denise Hyde, Community Builder, The Eden Alternative

The workforce fuels the life and services in a community, as critical a part of the infrastructure as the pillars supporting a roof. The shortages of needed staff members the industry experienced before the pandemic are likely to continue over the long-term unless changes are made in culture and operations.

Future-proofing the workforce begins by considering the attitudes of senior and middle management and workers in all roles. Is there a sense that some workers are more important than others? Or an assumption that some individuals are incapable of independent action for the betterment of residents and work requirements? Has a top-heavy hierarchal organizational structure limited new ideas or quick action?

As the community reimagines the future, there are many approaches that can be used to recruit and retain workers, lessen workloads, and engage older adults as allies.

Rebuild positive attitudes toward jobs held by frontline staff. Promote positions for nursing assistants and care staff as high-value jobs that are purposeful, help out family members, provide an income, and make a difference to individuals and society. Managers of these positions model this positive attitude, respecting the ideas of staff members and adjusting schedules as much as possible to meet their needs. Truly value the individuals who provide care to keep them energized and feeling fulfilled in their work.

Invest in the workforce with professional development and practical support. Provide training on job roles, but also soft skills of communication, listening and teamwork. Support workers with mentors, problem-solving sessions, stress management techniques and constructive feedback. Peers help one another and the culture demands every person pitch in when a need appears.

Offer workers robust benefits. Include health care plans for all positions in the organization, either with a low- or no-deductible plan, or allow staff access to on-site clinic services. Childcare or adult day services at the community could be provided in part by residents. Take advantage of resources already available in the community by making food service, fitness areas and wellness programs available to staff and families.

Provide affordable housing options. Open affordable housing units to staff and their families so they can live, work and even play as part of the community. By living on campus or nearby, direct care staff avoid long commutes and risks of infectious illness, while making it possible to work one job instead of two because the economics enable it. An organic recruitment approach, children of staff and extended family members see the value in working at the community as a future career.

Expand the definition of "workforce" to include families and residents. Enlist those family caregivers who would take care of their loved ones if they were paid and could afford to do so. Provide the training and monitoring to aid them in this work. Some residents are able and willing to work for wages, which makes living in the community more affordable and is part of their professional wellness.

Rethink job descriptions. A universal worker is cross-trained to competently perform a variety of jobs, with the side benefit of breaking down silos. This type of position must be balanced by workers who are more specialized, with deeper subject matter expertise. Depending on the role, regulations will dictate the qualifications a worker must have to perform certain tasks.

Integrate residents into program leadership. Encourage more resident-led programming by developing a culture

Future-proof workforce quality, growth and retention

of engagement as opposed to more passive participation. Consider how to audition residents so they teach or lead activities within the scope of their abilities and the standards established within the field where they will work.

Implement technology to replace selected staff tasks. Motion sensors and voice-activated technologies allow staff to check on each resident at need instead of a set schedule. Telehealth enables residents to check and report blood pressure, temperature or similar markers. Instead of asking for staff assistance, residents on their own can open automatic doors and use touchless appliances like water faucets. A possible benefit for the resident is longer maintenance of abilities to perform activities of daily living and a sense of independence.

Fit wellness opportunities into staff schedules. Before the pandemic, staff in all roles dealt with the loss of a favorite resident or problems at work. During and after the pandemic, stress is even higher because of financial troubles, housing risk, home schooling and the need to perform extra work as staff shortages loomed. Staff needs for emotional and practical support, especially for those who are in a caregiving role at home, is as great as the needs of residents. A future-proofed community provides it.

Workforce quality, growth and retention		
Potential shocks & stressors	**What's possible to minimize**	
Staffing shortages; regulatory requirements about credentials staff needs; lack of care staff, maintenance staff.	Develop a pool of part-time workers, credentialed for various roles, to fill jobs when needed.	Use technology to lessen workload for staff, e.g., enabling residents to perform some tasks, such as monitoring blood pressure.
Frontline positions perceived negatively; young people discouraged from these positions; constant loop of training and losing workers.	Develop career advancement ladder where person can join the senior living field right out of high school and see it as a meaningful career with opportunity for growth.	Reframe community as a desirable workplace by giving employees, including frontline staff, opportunities to be creative and actively involved in decision making.
Current staff burnout, fatigue; reluctance to work weekends, evenings, nights.	Institute flexible work schedules; adjust workflows to enable technology integration into systems.	Cross-train staff to cover for others, train to respond to emergencies or select a dedicated emergency response team.
Wage increases to hire and retain workers impacts budgets; competition from companies paying more for less stressful jobs.	Add benefits for employees to improve compensation package; allow staff to access community services, e.g., dining, fitness areas, lectures as a benefit.	Add affordable housing on campus for team members at a reduced rate; provide roommate matching service.

Future-proof wellness culture and lifestyle

"People think of wellness as a cost item, but they need to look at it as a differentiator, wellness is why people move in. It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking it's all about compliance and passing a state survey when really it's about improving the well-being of residents."

Max Mosky, Director of Analytics, Morrison Living

Dimensions of Wellness
International Council on Active Aging®

INTELLECTUAL
PHYSICAL
SOCIAL
SPIRITUAL
VOCATIONAL
EMOTIONAL
ENVIRONMENTAL

Fundamental to the culture of the future-proofed community is the definition of "wellness." Wellness, interwoven in all areas of an individual's life, is integral to the way dining, housekeeping, personal care, exercise, lifelong learning, and all other services and features are provided. Wellness is the value proposition of the current and future community, the differentiator that separates the philosophy and culture from all other housing and care options.

In the old normal, prepandemic days, wellness was defined differently by organizations and sometimes considered an "extra" that the community could do without. New models abandon that attitude to attract residents and optimize the flow between the property and the larger community, the intergenerational staff, families and residents, and

integration into value-based care. Wellness is not a "program," but a universal approach to well-being.

Prioritize wellness in the organizational culture. Incorporating the multidimensional definition of wellness into the organization's mission positions it as the driver of culture that integrates into all areas of the community. The focus is on where the organization and individuals are going, not on where each has been. The term "wellness" is not applied to a single department (e.g., health care or fitness) but applies to all service areas. Maintain the culture of collaboration so staff in all areas include wellness in their daily activities for the common good of the community.

Measure wellness results. Identify a manageable number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are tracked and reported to demonstrate the value of wellness culture and lifestyle to funders, management and residents. (Wellness KPIs are found in the ICAA/ProMatura Wellness Benchmarks, see Resources). Rethink how participation is defined, adding virtual-only to in-person participants for a more accurate representation of interest in wellness opportunities.

Recommit to educate staff and residents. Aid residents and staff in redefining the ways that wellness is delivered during times like a pandemic when they cannot access opportunities in a traditional way. Provide training and encouragement to team members so they are comfortable translating company culture into relationships with residents, and using technology as one pathway.

Reimagine content and location. Use a hybrid model to provide content virtually and in-person, balancing larger

Future-proof wellness culture and lifestyle

and smaller groups. Participants appreciate on-demand content that allows them to choose a time versus making time for a scheduled meeting. Consider opportunities across functional levels and personal interests, replacing assumptions about the average age in a community.

Refresh content with off-site partnerships. Develop program diversity by partnering with community centers, libraries, recreation departments, schools, online programs, and Medicare Advantage for an exchange of "programs" and subject matter expertise. These organizations already have programs aimed at older adults and may not think about senior living or long-term care as an audience. Recognize the need for a variety of opportunities and programs to keep people engaged and connected.

Prepare to reach younger people. Aligning content for exchanges with partners in community centers, schools

and libraries means that participants will be young adults or children as well as older adults. Technology platforms can reach many age groups. Occasional visits with schoolchildren or isolated programs with high school students will need to be updated and become more central to the focus of lifestyle activities.

Appropriately integrate technology into programming. Organize a variety of modes of delivery: face to face, virtual, hybrid. Identify and leverage evidence-based, digital wellness content, accessible to residents and staff across a variety of delivery platforms. Utilize in-house communication channels, such as televisions and kiosks. Ensure security and privacy of those logging in to virtual activities. Maintain a back-up plan of how to deliver opportunities if technology fails.

Wellness culture and lifestyle		
Potential shocks & stressors	**What's possible to minimize**	
Reduced program participation; residual fear from pandemic coupled with divisive culture causes people to disengage.	Rethink definition of participation since technology has reached people who do not ordinarily attend in-person events.	Engage partners in the larger community along with residents to design and deliver wellness programs that are meaningful to them.
Lack of skilled staff, availability of trained and quality staffing to support well-being.	Invest in content from commercial providers, e.g., educational videos, fitness classes, virtual reality experiences.	Hire and train from within, offering opportunities for staff to stay and grow into the wellness culture of the community.
Leadership considers wellness a commodity or talking point, does not fund or cuts funding from budget.	Reposition wellness as a differentiator, not a cost center, since it is the attribute that attracts and retains residents.	Add small dollar amounts to each service area to cover costs, e.g., add one dollar to meal plan/dining, one dollar to housekeeping, etc.

Rewriting the playbook for future-proofed communities

"We will be facing other challenges due to COVID-19 and we are resilient; however, we must have our bondholders understand and be partners with us as we face the reality of occupancy due to COVID."

Shirley Barnes, CEO, Crest View Senior Communities

When "old-age homes" were formed in the 1800s by religious groups and fraternal organizations, there was a need to provide housing and care for the elderly. Today's and tomorrow's older adults have similar needs, but the world they live in is very different.

Resting on top of economics, politics, culture and a health crisis is longevity—people can expect to live into their '80s and '90s. (In 1860, life expectancy in the U.S. averaged 39.4 years [O'Neill 2020].) Across the three or four generations of older adults, chronological age is no longer a proxy for good health or poor health, employment or joblessness, financial security or poverty. A future-proofed organization will toss out the playbook of the past to recreate itself for the future.

The thought leaders who imagined a new model for senior living during the ICAA Forum are not unaware of the major roadblocks they will have to roll aside in order to implement these ideas. Foremost is shifting a business exclusive to older adults to one that opens, at least in part, to younger people. Right behind is the attitude of some current residents, who may not be comfortable with staff members and their families living on the property and mingling in shared spaces. Or inviting neighbors into their private spaces. Emerging from isolation and allowing non-community voices a part in decision-making is not simple.

Who will be included in the future population? This is a big question for future-proofed organizations. Each year

From the insights of this meeting, what is the ONE WORD that describes the most important element for the future of senior living communities?

personalization empowering engagement hyrbidnation integrated change collaboration connected community communal simplify wellness open flexibility resilience adapt creativity opportunity thoughtful action adaptability education creative hybridnation flexible hope "family" technology solution-oriented agility communication innovation staffing/benefits adaptable hybrid-programming harmony

Rewriting the playbook for future-proofed communities

the values of different ethnic and cultural groups need to be considered; some people arrive with high-acuity health care needs and others are energetically striving for a healthy longevity. Globally, the populations of most countries are aging, meaning even more older people could benefit from a lifestyle that respects their physical, cognitive and emotional abilities. Matching the trends in the larger society to the vision and services offered by the organization will help ensure sustainability.

Perhaps the highest barrier to leap is financing. Current sources of funding will be restructured; new sources found. Organizations serving older adults have an advantage: the need for their services remains and their capabilities can extend outside their property lines. This advantage needs to be relayed to investors who may be focused on short-term returns and have a superficial knowledge of the business of "senior" living. Across the globe, companies and businesses are experiencing economic pressures, which suggests financial institutions and investors may be more flexible

when presented with a reliable market that serves a growing population.

The suggestions generated during the ICAA Forum 2020 were proposed by experienced thought leaders in senior living, people familiar with the strategic and tactical roles of an organization. They were joined by selected industry suppliers, equally experienced in providing services and products for older and younger people. The concepts and specifics they presented are the fertile ground for future-proofing your organization.

The next models of living for the 50+ population means taking risks, and some risks are very large. On balance, the rewards could be even larger by moving the industry beyond the small percentage that currently utilizes its services. With the dual goals of providing for the aging population and sustaining an organization's mission, making changes may well be the way to survive through the next decades as the greater risk may be to do nothing and become irrelevant.

Details

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