



May 14 Telepresser Remarks
Jim Bernardo, Presbyterian Senior Living President and CEO
THURSDAY, MAY 14, 10:30 AM by ZOOM

Good Morning. Our Organization Presbyterian Senior has 33 locations serving seniors.

15 of these locations offer Nursing Home and/or Personal Care/Assisted Living, 3 here in the Lehigh Valley.

Currently five of our communities are affected by COVID-19, two of them here in the Lehigh Valley.

In our entire system we have 92 cases, 69 in the Lehigh Valley. The great majority in skilled nursing.

What are the differences between our communities and being affected, it's mostly the luck of location. All of our affected nursing facilities are located in areas where prevalence is high where our staff live.

As you have heard, nursing home residents are the perfect places to suffer the ravages of this virus, severely compromised health, close quarters and staff that must frequently be in close physical proximity to provide care for the most basic of human needs. Care of a skilled nursing resident is truly personal care, care that involves touch.

But the most insidious part of this virus is the number of people that are infected and show no symptoms! Despite physical screening that we do at the beginning and end of every shift, many of our staff are very contagious and they do not know it. We were recently lucky enough to get an adequate number of tests to test our staff at one of our affected communities, 12% of the staff tested were positive showing absolutely no symptoms. That was a snapshot of that day, we have no idea of how many asymptomatic positive staff members we have in the previous 4 weeks and until we get regular testing in the future we will only continue to have snapshots. Also keep in mind that if you are symptomatic you can be very contagious before symptoms appear. Each of these contagious people can be in physical contact with as many as 8 residents per shift worked. Can you get a sense of how this virus spreads as a wildfire?

Complicating this further, once the outbreak begins, because of the lack of PPE we are not able to fully protect our residents or the staff who care for them.

Under the current federal standards, when we have one confirmed Covid Positive resident in a building, we should change PPE between each and every instance of resident contact. Meeting that federal standard in our nursing home that are affected just for just gowns, would require 15 gowns a day per resident, 5,340 gowns per day or 37,380 per week. We would be happy at this point if we could just changing gown between confirmed cases that would still require 15,000 gowns per week.

We currently have 14,000 gowns in inventory, even with 3 staff working 100 hours a week finding and distributing gowns we don't even have the minimum we hope to have for a week. And through April have spent more than a half million dollar. How we get by is by having staff hang the gown in a resident's room, and developing makeshift protect like fabricating gowns from for disposable painters tarps.

As an organization, we have been very transparent with our cases, actively communicating with our families and providing them regular opportunities to remotely contact their family members. We also spend a lot of time explaining families to families that there is a disconnect between what they hear on the news and the reality of what we are experience.

As we think about what is happening in Nursing Homes, we need to think of this NOT as a failure of nursing homes, but to view this as a failure of our society and our government to prepare and mitigate onslaught of this insidious virus by providing testing and PPE the and allowing it has ravage our most vulnerable seniors.