



HEALTHTRUST

Seniors Housing & Healthcare Real Estate Advisory Services



TRENDS IN SENIORS HOUSING

Evaluating Risk

How to analyze if the properties in your portfolio have evaluated risk and are prepared for routine state inspections.

In August of last year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) resumed routine inspections. Certain routine inspections were suspended as part of CMS' response to the pandemic so they could prioritize infection control and immediate jeopardy situations and give health care providers and suppliers the time needed to respond to the pandemic. (cms.gov 08172020)

During this exceptional time, state surveyors focused on infection polices and each state's individual and changing rules. Assisted Living and Memory Care facilities were also inspected for policies and infection control processes related to the pandemic.

In a press release in August 2020, more than \$15 million in fines were levied against skilled nursing facilities. The following month CMS made public that 32,681 targeted infection control surveys were conducted from March through August and 777 infection control deficiencies were cited. Of the 777 deficiencies, 75 were cited at the immediate jeopardy level. (Center for Medicare Advocacy 10082020)

What should you expect from the Corporate, Regional, and Property Leadership? What processes are in place that can identify areas of risk for the residents and the property? The following information is not limited to those facilities licensed by CMS but also Independent, Assisted Living and Memory Care (IL,AL,MC) communities.

- Are the Properties "Survey Ready"? It would be good practice to have a Survey Readiness binder prepared and kept up to date for Routine, Complaint and Focused Infection Inspections. An example of some items to include in a survey readiness binder are a key list of personnel, copy of written information regarding residents' rights, mealtimes, medication pass times, list of resident admissions/transfers/discharges during the past month and copies of the facilities admission contracts. Additionally, a separate binder for Focused Infection Control surveys. The surveyors will review the facilities policies and process for items such as their Infection Control Program, Surveillance Plan, Screening Practices, and Education for residents, staff, vendors, and visitors.
- Is there a current Emergency Preparedness manual and is the manual updated regularly? Again, this is not only pertaining to the CMS licensed facilities but also IL, AL, MC. The manual assists the facility in developing effective plans for dealing with emergency situations such as power outage, natural disasters, and evacuations just to name a few.
- Do the Properties participate in the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) process as directed by CMS? Some states do require IL, AL, MC to have a Quality Assurance program (QA). How does the Corporate and Regional team evaluate the effectiveness of the program? QAPI and QA will help to identify areas of risk prior to any surveys. This should be an ongoing process.

When analyzing your portfolio for evaluated risk, you should inspect what you expect. Good quality outcomes and quality of life are the main reasons for working in Senior Living.

For more information, please contact:

Christie LaPlant, RN, MSN
Director-Management & Clinical Assessments
(941) 363-7524
christie.laplant@healthtrust.com





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For more information, please contact:

Colleen Blumenthal, MAI
COO/Partner
(941) 363-7502
colleen.blumenthal@healthtrust.com

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