

2020 in review »

Although 2020 began with another extremely successful Annual Meeting in Palm Springs in January, this year has been anything but routine for the American Seniors Housing Association and its membership. And while most of us would prefer to look forward to the post-COVID

era, ASHA worked round-the-clock in 2020 and had the most active advocacy year in its 29-year history.

We also led the industry's efforts to counter negative media coverage and continued our long-standing tradition of leadership in conducting seminal research.

With the onset of the COVID-19 crisis in mid-March, the ASHA legislative team immediately responded by working on multiple fronts 24/7 to successfully help the industry secure funding, access rapid testing kits, and seek prioritized access to the vaccine. »

Provider Relief Funds

Our legislative team backed by ASHA member outreach began work in March to help senior living access funds from the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund (PRF) to cover COVID-related expenses and losses. Longtime ASHA Executive Board member Bob Thomas of Senior Star and ASHA Vice President of Government Affairs Jeanne McGlynn Delgado collaborated with U.S. Senator James Lankford (R-OK) and his legislative staff to educate other Members of Congress

and the Trump Administration about the crucial role senior living would play to keep nearly 2 million older adults safe and out of the hospital.

Senator Lankford, who in November was recognized by ASHA with its Congressional Hero Award, was the catalyst for a bi-partisan letter signed by 27 members of the U.S. Senate in April urging the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to make Provider Relief Funds available to senior living communities.

Although it took several months of non-stop effort by the ASHA legislative team, membership and other industry associations, licensed senior living settings ultimately qualified for access to PRF funds. ASHA's legislative team continues to advocate for additional resources to help the industry deal with mounting expenses and loss and will work with the incoming Biden Administration and the outgoing administration in the weeks ahead. »

Leadership on Safe Reopening, Vaccination Prioritization and Access to Rapid Testing Kits

While ASHA was leading efforts to secure CARES Act funding for senior living, the ASHA team also began working with Anne Tumlinson and her colleagues at ATI Advisory on several notable and interrelated policy projects.

In June, ASHA published *Considerations for Balancing Residents' Safety as Communities Reopen: A Strategic Approach to the COVID-19*

Pandemic to provide operators and policymakers thought leadership and best practices regarding safe reopening. Elements of this work were used by ASHA to prepare crucial testimony that was presented in early September to the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to assist the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in planning for the prioritization and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccination.

ASHA President David Schless participated in a NASEM hearing and urged the governing body to ensure that workers and residents in all senior living settings (IL, AL, MC and CCRC) are covered in the prioritized phase, not just those residing in nursing homes. As we get closer to

the initiation of the vaccination phase, ASHA continues to educate state governors and others involved in the decision-making process to ensure that

senior living staff and residents are among the first groups to receive the vaccine. ASHA commissioned a report by Diane O'Malley of Hanson Bridgett

that offered guidance to ASHA members regarding legal considerations and vaccination policies.

ASHA's legislative team also interceded to ensure

that HHS expanded the distribution of the Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 rapid testing kits to CLIA-certified assisted living communities beginning in the Fall. »

Public Relations

Faced with considerable negative press regarding our industry during the pandemic outbreak, ASHA executed a two-phased national public relations campaign. From May to July, our initial phase combatted these misleading reports by stressing how communities are learning and adapting to help residents thrive.

This messaging was prominently displayed in major media sites such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Atlanta Constitution Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Miami Herald*, *Dallas Morning News* and *Los Angeles Times*. Our responses,

including letters to the editor in the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, reached more than 15.7 million website visitors, and engaged more than 1.3 million people through video ads.

The second phase of ASHA's national public relations campaign launched in late October and is now underway through the end of the year. Phase two content revolves around building trust and confidence in senior living to support sales and marketing efforts.

Initial phase two results (through 12/4) are very promising. In slightly more than a month, paid social ads were viewed by over 1.3 million

with nearly 315,000 engagements. Online display ads have had over 2.8 million views on a vast array of national media sites including *The New York Times*, *Miami Herald* and AARP's website, and our video testimonials (Staff, Residents, and Adult Child Influencer) have been viewed by more than 1.3 million.

Top Designated Market Areas (DMAs) in the first few weeks of the campaign's second phase include New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Seattle.

While the first phase of the ASHA public relations campaign targeted influential media sites (including the

New York Times, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Boston Globe*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*), the current strategy incorporates a geo-tiered strategy targeting both large and smaller markets. The strategy is also retargeting visitors to our Where You Live Matters website to advance prospects in the sales process and is focused on future consumers and their families.

The second phase of the campaign utilizes digital video advertising, online display advertising, paid search advertising, paid social advertising, and owned social advertising. »

Research and Education

At the onset of the COVID crisis in March, ASHA began fielding weekly spot-surveys of owners, operators, and investors to help fellow members better understand the impact of the crisis on the industry. These surveys were not shared publicly nor with the media but captured a tremendous wealth of data that aided the industry with firsthand information about issues ranging from occupancy, to testing, to investment perspectives and much more. Brad Dubin of Kandu Capital/Bloom Senior Living and Matthew Whitlock of Berkshire Residential Investments provided valuable assistance to the ASHA staff, which captured data between March 15 and July 28.

ASHA also released several important new Special Issue Briefs in 2020, in addition to the aforementioned *Considerations for Balancing Seniors Housing Residents' Safety as Communities Reopen: A Strategic Approach to the COVID-19 Pandemic*.

- *The Immediate Financial Impact of COVID-19 on Senior Living Communities*, summarized a study conducted for ASHA by HealthTrust that examined data from more than 180,000 units between March through June. This research has been used extensively in advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill and was the backdrop for a popular webinar that featured Colleen Blumenthal of HealthTrust, Bill Sciortino

of Discovery Senior Living, and Kathryn Sweeney of Blue Moon Capital Group.

- *Telemedicine: Transformational Innovation* from Jim Bowe with GlenAire Health-Care reported in-depth perspectives on telemedicine from CareMore Health and operators including Senior Resource Group, Benchmark Senior Living, ALG Senior and Brookdale.
- *FHA and ADA Developments in Senior Housing and How to Avoid Discriminatory Practices* explored emerging areas of the law that include marketing and advertising, websites, accessibility concerns for disabled individuals, and treatment of members of

the LGBTQ communities. This Brief was prepared by Jill Steinberg and Michele Gipp of Arent Fox.

- Staying on top of the fluid developments regarding COVID-19, each week we provided an updated *State by State COVID Guide*, including the latest on state liability protections, testing requirements, reporting and visitation policies.
- ASHA and ProMatura teamed up in the summer with an extensive survey that examined the perceptions of consumers about senior living during the COVID-era. This research included feedback from prospects from company lead lists as well as a survey of 75+

age and income qualified individuals residing in the markets where the prospects who were surveyed lived. A follow-up survey, also being conducted by ProMatura for ASHA, is currently in the field.

Our annual publications *2020 ASHA Seniors Housing Industry Executive Compensation Report* (produced for ASHA by Pearl Meyer); *The State of Seniors Housing 2020 report*; and the *2020*

ASHA 50 rankings (published in *Seniors Housing Business*) also updated members with important data and industry trends.

The ASHA Annual Meeting was held in January in Palm Springs, CA and the session summaries were made available in our Annual Meeting Highlights Newsletter.

Our Mid-Year and Rising Leaders Meeting was held

virtually due to the COVID pandemic, and session highlights summarized in a Mid-Year Meeting Report.

Working with Masterpiece Living, ASHA also released a series of complimentary webinars titled “Senior Living During COVID-19” that explored how the industry is adapting and moving forward during the pandemic.

In addition to the webinar that looked at the immediate financial impact of COVID on the industry, sessions included ASHA President David Schless interviewing Dr. Roger Landry, author of *Live Long Die Short*, and a separate discussion about marketing and sales during the COVID-era that featured Dr. Landry interviewing Catherine L. Owens of The Wolff Companies. »

Strategic Plan

ASHA convened a Strategic Planning Committee that was comprised of Steve Blazejewski of PGIM, Colleen Blumenthal of HealthTrust, Doug Dollenberg of Brightview Senior Living, Jerry Frumm of Senior Lifestyle, Richard Hutchinson of Discovery Senior Living, Lynne Katzmann of Juniper Communities, Dana Scheppman of Capital One, Doug Schiffer of Allegro Senior Living, Kathryn Sweeney of Blue Moon Capital Partners, Ben Thompson of Senior Living Communities, and Margaret Wylde of ProMatura.

The Strategic Planning Committee reaffirmed most of the elements from ASHA’s previous strategic planning process (2015 – 2020), including:

Vision: Living Longer Better

Mission: ASHA is the industry thought leader promoting quality and innovation, advancing industry knowledge through research, exchanging strategic business information and influencing legislative and regulatory matters.

Core Principles

1. Promote a favorable business climate that supports quality, competition, innovation and long-term investment in seniors housing
2. Advance information and research that frame and influence key industry initiatives.
3. Promote the identification and advancement of emerging industry leaders who reflect the increasing diversity of the business,
4. Support research and national initiatives that enable customers to receive high quality services and live with dignity in the setting of their choice.
5. Looking ahead to the 2021-2026 strategic plan, the Committee turned its attention to the Goals, Objectives and Outcomes.

GOAL: Advocacy

The new Strategic Plan (2021-2026) underscores the critical importance of focusing on a few key areas. This includes a coordinated federal Advocacy program to provide a strong voice for seniors housing developers, owners and operators on Capitol Hill.

GOAL: Research and Education

Our new strategic plan streamlines our activities, allowing ASHA to be more focused and effective. We will continue our important work educating consumers through our Where You Live Matters program, but this will now become part of our Research & Education objectives to promote the value proposition of age-qualified housing.

GOAL: Communications

The COVID crisis highlighted the importance of communicating with policymakers, the public, and our members. So much so that we created a new Vice President of Communications position to ensure that we interact with maximum effectiveness with our external audience (Legislators, Regulators, Consumers, General Public) and our internal audience (ASHA members, Rising Leaders, ASHA App).

GOAL: Member Engagement

The new strategic plan also underscores our focus on providing senior executives and next generation leaders with a unique forum to share cutting

edge research, best practices, and business opportunities. We expect to create new councils or committees in the months ahead that are linked to ASHA objectives.

The new strategic plan also called for a new ASHA identity package, which includes a new ASHA logo design (recently unveiled) and an update for our membership brochure, newsletter designs and other communications collateral.

Finally, as part of our efforts to focus on Advocacy, Research and Education, and Member Engagement, the Rising Leaders program will become part of our overall member engagement objective. Rising Leaders will continue to receive all of our materials and will be encouraged to participate in ASHA meetings and activities.

In sum, the new strategic plan will allow ASHA to focus more of its energy on federal advocacy, promoting the value proposition of our product, and engaging more senior executives from member companies to help us do more to advance the industry in the five years ahead. »

Seniors Housing PAC

Led by Seniors Housing PAC Chair Richard Hutchinson of Discovery Senior Living and bolstered by the efforts of this year's PAC Captains Ken Assiran, Capital Health Group; Colleen Blumenthal, HealthTrust; Jerry Frumm, Senior Lifestyle; Michael Grust, Senior Resource Group; Jim Hands, Salem Equity; Scott Lieber, Willis Towers Watson; Ken Roos, Arena; Bill Sciortino, Discovery Senior Living; Bob Thomas,

Senior Star; Matthew Whitlock, Berkshire Residential Investments, contributions to the PAC in 2020 totaled \$434,594 from 354 individuals (including 100% participation of the ASHA staff).

The Seniors Housing PAC disbursed \$673,000 to 46 Senators and 96 House Members during the 2019-2020 election cycle on a bipartisan basis. Of those up for re-election, 94 percent won their elections, while only

four percent were defeated and two of the elections have not been called.

This year's Chairman's Circle Event was held virtually on November 19 and featured U.S. Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA), U.S. Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) and MSNBC Political Analyst Michael Steele. Each spoke separately to our Chairman's Circle members about a range of issues of importance to the industry.

Senator Lankford was presented with ASHA's 2020

"Congressional Hero" Award by Bob Thomas for his pivotal role in helping the senior living industry receive relief funds from the federal government following the COVID-19 outbreak. His early action to gain support from his Senate colleagues and request for an allocation from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to our industry paved the way for senior living to have access to these much-needed funds. »

In Closing

I want to take this opportunity to thank the ASHA staff including Paul Bergeron, Megs Bertoni, Doris Maultsby, Jeanne McGlynn Delgado, and Sheff Richey for their extraordinary and tireless efforts during the year. I could not be prouder of your dedication and talent.

I also want to thank the professionals we work with on the legislative side for their hard work at all hours of the day and night: Randy Hardock of Davis & Harman, Stuart Chapman of Thorn Run Partners, and Jamie Gregory of Calfee Strategic Solutions.

We are also most appreciative of the outstanding counsel we receive from Hanson Bridgett, including Paul Gordon, Joel Goldman, and Diane O'Malley. Special thanks, as well, to Susan Kayser and Amy McCracken of Duane Morris.

I would also like to offer my sincere thanks to Colleen Blumenthal, Alan Plush, and Samantha Medred of HealthTrust for their efforts to ensure the success of the annual State of Seniors Housing research project. I am equally appreciative of the outstanding work of ProMatura Group with

our ongoing consumer research initiatives and especially want to thank Dr. Kristen Paris, Edie Smith, and Dr. Margaret Wylde.

My sincere thanks, as well, to the many individuals involved in the Where You Live Matters consumer education initiative at Glynn Devins, including Pete Watson and Abby Smith.

I would also like to thank my industry colleagues Mark Parkinson of the American Health Care Association, James Balda of Argentum, Katie Sloan of LeadingAge, Scott Tittle of the National

Center for Assisted Living, and Brian Jurutka of the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing & Care. We spent many hours together in 2020 and I am grateful to each for their willingness to collaborate in unprecedented ways.

Although 2020 has been extraordinarily challenging, I am extremely proud of our industry's efforts to serve nearly two million older adults. I am grateful to you for your continued support of ASHA and remain optimistic that the future for our sector is bright. »

Warmest regards,

David Schless
President

