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COVID-19 IN NURSING HOMES: A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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COVID-19 in Nursing Homes: A Comprehensive Survey of Healthcare Management Practices

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ABSTRACT

The Coronavirus Disease, identified in 2019 (COVID-19) became a Pandemic that challenged the healthcare industry to assume a new position of preparedness to respond quickly and purposefully amid mounting operational trials. Administrators were challenged to defend the safety of their patients and staff against a novel virus, equipped with little information about the virulence of SARS COV-2. Studying the virus’ establishment among vulnerable populations will shed light on how to protect these groups. Research has demonstrated that COVID-19 has disproportionately affected the senior population (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020, Severe Outcomes Among Patients with Coronavirus Disease 2019), with adults over 65 years of age constituting 80% of hospitalizations and exhibiting a mortality rate 23 times higher than their counterparts under 65 (Mueller et al., 2020). As a subset of this population, residents of long-term care facilities are a particularly at-risk bracket of individuals. Long-term care facilities can include intermediate care facilities, nursing homes, assisted living communities, inpatient hospice, and community integration homes. For this study, nursing homes will be the primary subject of discourse. On December 28, 2020, at a Georgia Governor’s press conference, Dr. Kathleen Toomey, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Health, affirmed that residents in nursing homes comprised greater than 95% of all COVID-19 deaths in Georgia, despite accounting for only 5% of positive cases in the state (Trubey & Sturgis, 2020). Also, in December 2020 (the peak of pandemic-related U.S. deaths), the United States Government Accountability Office

reported 33,600 nursing home resident cases and 28,600 staff cases (Dicken, J. E., & United States, 2021, p. 4). It is crucial to learn from initial local responses to the novel coronavirus to understand how nursing homes can be equipped to respond to future emergencies. This study is in progress, and three out of four participants have responded to the survey thus far. As such, the introduction, background, and general data on the case rates in the Central Savannah River Area will be included in the poster. Additionally, a preliminary analysis of survey data will be included in accordance with the timeframe of coordination efforts with the Augusta University Biostatistics Department.

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