

Southwest RISE brings purpose, direction, and fun to local skilled nursing facilities



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Transforming infection prevention education from ‘boring basics’ to an interactive program for all staff and administration was the key to this success story. The Pennsylvania Department of Health, Long-Term Care Resiliency, Infrastructure, Support and Empowerment program developed a number of different informative and interactive trainings to improve infection prevention and control practices at long-term care facilities.

The “What”



The Pennsylvania Department of Health, Long-Term Care Resiliency, Infrastructure, Support and Empowerment (LTC RISE) program, which receives funding through the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for the Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases (ELC) cooperative agreement was started in January 2022 to assist long-term care facilities (LTCFs). A LTCF in Southwest Pennsylvania, was resistant to COVID-19 outbreak emergency response assistance. They felt their corporate structure provided them with resources to meet their needs.

In April 2022, LTC RISE staff began building a relationship with the facility Infection Preventionist (IP). Through open discussion with administration, LTC RISE identified gaps with their current education plan. Just one month later, a quality education plan tailored to the facility’s needs was presented. This plan included infection prevention and control, staff resiliency and education, emergency preparedness, hazard planning/OSHA, outbreak policy and procedures, customer satisfaction, resident mobility and mentation, and patient safety. It also included education of environmental service personnel on contact times, best practice use of cleaning products, and establishment of a process that provides quick access to this information.

After several iterations of this education, the IP provided feedback that their staff was looking for a hands-on approach, with a focus on interactive training. By January 2023 LTC RISE transitioned to a unit-to-unit based approach, abandoning lecture-style training and limiting staff participation. The LTC RISE team received great feedback from this visit, with an invitation to continue future educational endeavors. The IP shared, “I have been remiss



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in thanking you for your time and efforts last week and that of your team. Please know we are so appreciative and look forward to continuing our partnership. Let me know when you have the escape room ready to go! I'll definitely sign up!"

In April 2023, the newest interactive training was released at the facility, just as they requested. LTC RISE offered the first Project First Line Escape Room, bringing education on hand hygiene, source control, donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE), and the vital contact time and disinfection education. This education in the form of a game with a competitive angle proved to be exactly what the facility was looking for.

In May 2023, LTC RISE participated in the annual activity fair at the facility. For this activity, the LTC RISE team set up a table with activities that covered the basics of hand hygiene, donning and doffing of PPE, and other infection prevention measures. It also included a GloGerm powder activity, one in which the staff were able to put the powder on their gloves and in the process of removing them, see exactly where the powder remained and how taking off the gloves does not mean germs do not still stay on your wrists and hands. GloGerm was also applied to different medical equipment, showing just how important it is to clean all surfaces thoroughly. This was one of the LTC RISE team's most successful training sessions.

LTC RISE has offered education modules to **more than 200 staff**, covering topics from Project Firstline facilitator toolkit, infection control initiatives, and communication.

The "So What"

The impact of this relationship and utilizing interactive training reached many individuals. Through various communication and feedback streams, LTC RISE was able to tailor the education offerings to a corporate-backed facility that was unlikely to invest in this relationship. In total, LTC RISE has offered education modules to more than 200 staff, covering topics from Project Firstline facilitator toolkit, proper infection control initiatives, and even enhancement of communication in the workplace. The LTC RISE team has been able to make a public health impact at this facility and form a relationship that continues to flourish. The team remains in close contact with the facility, with a weekly touchpoint between registered nurses, visits by regional clinical leads to the facility, and continued support from the emergency response team in the event of an outbreak. LTC RISE hopes to learn from this experience by strengthening not only corporate relationships but also integrating informative and interactive trainings.

The "Now What"

Building on this relationship and what was learned through these training initiatives, LTC RISE will continue to harbor a strong relationship with not only this facility but many other facilities across Southwestern Pennsylvania. LTC RISE is currently scheduled to complete an interactive module on fall prevention, resident mobility and mentation, and cannot wait to implement new training in healthcare diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The team is

also currently working to develop another escape room as requested. This escape room, focusing on DEI has already been discussed with various facilities. Thanks to the collaborative relationship with this site and lessons learned, LTC RISE will continue to evolve trainings into interactive activities, foster relationships with all enrolled facilities to encourage trainings, and continue to look forward to public health initiatives in infection control, as well as resident and staff health and well-being.

Key contributors to this project include Melanie Marien, Alison Chestnut, and Paulina Brown, all with Pennsylvania Department of Health Southwest LTC-RISE Team.