

Coronavirus Exposed Long-Term Issues in the Senior Care Community

In a post-pandemic world, businesses across the board are struggling to adapt and find a way to serve their customers safely and Senior Care communities are no exception. In fact, due to the fact that Senior Care facilities were ground zero for the pandemic and have so far accounted for 42% of coronavirus deaths, the need to adapt strategies to create a safe environment is of even greater importance.



In complex systems, when catastrophic failure occurs, the disaster forensics investigations reveal a pattern of multiple fault points that led to a chain of events.

Often these fault points had existed long before the catastrophe. This was evident in the root cause analysis of events like Space Shuttle Columbia disaster, 9-11 Commission Report etc. and will likely hold true even in case of Senior Care facilities and the

Coronavirus pandemic. One such long standing issue was pointed out just before the pandemic hit.

A report from the GAO^{1,2} found that:

“Most nursing homes and long-term care facilities weren’t doing enough to protect patients from spreading infection before the coronavirus pandemic. This has been a long-term issue and so the current environment really reinforces the need to focus on these types of infection control measures”.

For decades, Federal authorities have delegated the oversight function in our industry to the 50 states. Put simply, this practice produced 50 experiments on a broad spectrum from the strong oversight model (e.g. California) to the relatively lighter oversight found in other states.

Table 2: Infection Prevention and Control Deficiencies Cited, by State, 2017

State	Number of surveyed nursing homes	Number of surveyed nursing homes with an infection prevention and control deficiency cited	Percentage of surveyed nursing homes with an infection prevention and control deficiency cited
AK	16	5	31.3
AL	201	101	50.2
AR	217	86	39.6
AZ	131	30	22.9
CA	1,174	712	60.6
CO	187	87	46.5
CT	213	66	31.0
DC	18	6	33.3

Figure 1: Coronavirus exploited existing weaknesses

1. A government watchdog report released on Wednesday found that eight in 10 nursing homes inspected were cited for infection-control problems and there were “persistent problems” when it came to infection prevention. | <https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/707069.pdf>

2. Protecting Nursing Home Residents from Infections like COVID-19. - WatchBlog: Official Blog of the U.S. Government Accountability Office <https://blog.gao.gov/2020/05/21/protecting-nursing-home-residents-from-infections-like-covid-19/>

It's important to note however, that when an industry's self-regulation is found lacking and a catastrophe exposes its vulnerabilities, the pressure on regulators to step in increases. In essence, this makes it is only a matter of time before regulations are introduced, requiring stringent measures to keep our vulnerable residents safe.

Commissions of Inquiry!

There is already word of the formation of congressional inquiry commissions to dig into the COVID-19 debacle for seniors. For now, it's fair to conclude that, like in other complex systems, multiple points of failure will be found that resulted in the Coronavirus catastrophe in Senior Care facilities.

It's almost certain that results will show that a tragic combination of a virulent bug, poor administrative policies, inferior infrastructure, and deficient processes and procedures worked in synergy to escalate the virus' spread and its death toll.

Yet, it's vital that in order to serve our own customers – our residents and their families – that we let regulators do what they do, but with the understanding that we can't afford to wait.

The only way forward for our industry is to focus on what is in our power, including the changes that we can implement now to prevent another tragedy in the future.

Same Problem But a Very Different Perspective

After all, think about the same problem but from a very different perspective...

A public health or government official, such as Dr. Fauci, City Mayors, Governors, or the President, must think about 'controlling the spread' and focus on the macro level. Strategies they recommend like flatten-the-curve, tactics like shelter-in-place, social distancing and contact tracing, etc. may be useful for solving the problem they are solving.

But our perspective is a completely different one.

As an operator of Senior Care facility, I have the responsibility for the safety of 20 senior lives and the happiness of their families. It's like being the captain of a jet carrying 20 passengers coming in to land, with the Coronavirus storm raging around the airport.

Every day the news media is bombarding us with horrifying lightning and thunderbolt-like stories, visibility is zero, the air traffic control is giving unreliable directions, and my instrumentation dashboard is messed up. My passengers are panicking, their families down there are worried, my flight attendants are nervous, and I'm running low on fuel. I have no alternate landing sites, and despite all this, it's still my responsibility to bring in my plane and land safely. No one may applaud me for doing my job successfully. Some may even sue me for the work I do, and yet, I must succeed.

While Dr. Fauci, the President, the Governors or the Mayors may offer upbeat predictions while pointing to professional-looking PowerPoint slides until we all fall asleep, we are obliged to think for ourselves. It is incumbent upon us to think as the captains of our passenger jets in whom the passengers,

their families and the community as a whole have vested trust in.

Protecting Our Residents and Rebuilding Trust

To protect our residents and regain the trust after this pandemic, as well as any future

epidemics, it's vital that to meet the problem head-on and build a system that addresses the long-term issues that coronavirus exposed. That is a good road to redemption and becoming a trusted provider of senior care again.



To learn more about how the InfeXBloc™ architecture can help your Senior Care facility regain trust after the COVID-19 storm, check out www.infexbloc.com.

INFEXBLOC™ PILOT SITE

Golden Springs Ranch





About Ashish Warudkar

Ashish has worked in the software industry for 30+ years including 19+ years in the healthcare sector. He also has been an entrepreneur for over two decades and provides consultation to “Golden Springs Ranch” which is an upcoming InfeXBloc™ home in Palmdale, California which will introduce the innovations discussed in this paper to provide its precious residents with a safe happy home and their families with peace of mind.

Ashish Warudkar is trained at:

IIT Bombay	Mechanical Engineering
UCI	Predictive Analytics (7/8)
Harvard	Disruptive Innovation Strategy with Clayton Christensen
MIT	Advanced Certificate for Executives in Management, Innovation & Technology Architecture & Systems Engineering of Complex Systems Platform Strategy - Building & Thriving A Vibrant Ecosystem Business Dynamics - Diagnosing and Solving Complex Business Problems Executive Certificate in Strategy and Innovation
Product School	Product Management
BWW	Network Marketing
Oren Klaff	Pitch Mastery

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Meetup: Monthly meeting (first Sunday 6pm CA time) of Senior Care Accountability Network
<https://www.meetup.com/Senior-Care-Accountability-Network-SCAN/>

