As the COVID-19 emergency continues to evolve, the shift toward social distancing measures presents challenges to the health and well-being of older adults, particularly those with pre-existing conditions. Additionally, adults, 65 and older, face a greater risk for infection and death from COVID-19. In response to the pandemic, it is important to identify preventive methods and actions caregivers and health care leaders can take to continue to meet the needs of older adults. Numerous organizations have developed resources with guidance for those providing care in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living centers, at home and in other settings. The American Hospital Association (AHA) has gathered leading resources that offer practical guidance and tools to create a safe environment, and limit COVID-19 exposure to older adults.

Resources for Hospital Leaders

The following resources provide essential information for hospital and health system executive leaders as they continue to provide care to older adults during the COVID-19 crisis. Resources include tools to understand recent changes to health care policy, a framework to prioritize non-emergent services, and strategies to optimize personal protective equipment.

CMS — FAQs: Families First Coronavirus Response Act
This resource addresses frequently asked questions related to the recently ratified Families First Coronavirus Response Act. The document includes guidance on the timeframe of the emergency period, information on the new optional Medicaid eligibility group, benefits and cost sharing, and details about the increased Federal Medical Assistant Percentages.

HHS — CARES Act Provider Relief Fund
The Department of Health & Human Services offers information on garnering support through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act that provide relief funds to hospitals and health care providers on the front lines of the coronavirus response. This resource also includes eligibility information, links to cost report and reimbursement submission, and state by state information on fund distribution.

CMS — "Non-Emergent, Elective Medical Services, and Treatment Recommendations"
As the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services created recommendations to postpone nonessential surgeries and other procedures, this document provides a tiered framework to prioritize services and care to those who require emergent or urgent attention to save a life, manage severe disease or avoid further harms from an underlying condition.

CDC — "Strategies to Optimize the Supply of PPE and Equipment"
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's optimization strategies for personal protective equipment (PPE) offer options for use when PPE supplies are stressed, running low or absent.

Resources for Clinicians and Caregivers

These resources provide clinicians with critical tools to provide safe and compassionate care for older adults during COVID-19, including links to pertinent waivers, online training for clinicians and communication tools to help understand the needs of older adults during COVID-related isolation.

CMS — "Coronavirus Waivers & Flexibilities"
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services compiled a complete list of links to modified or waived Medicare, Medicaid or HIPAA requirements to offer more flexible access to care during COVID-19. It also provides information on additional emergency and disaster-related policies and procedures that may be implemented with an 1135 waiver and a fact sheet for physicians and practitioners.

IHI — "What Matters' to Older Adults?" Toolkit
This toolkit is designed for clinical teams to provide actionable steps and guidance to ensure that older adults' health outcomes are understood and integrated into their care plans. The toolkit includes checklists for culturally appropriate conversations, tips to initiate "What Matters" conversations, and communication and relationship strategies. In response to COVID-19, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement produced a webinar and article to build on the "What Matters" toolkit. The webinar details how to facilitate conversations using the toolkit during COVID-19, particularly advance care planning and the article "How to Talk About COVID-19 and Your Patients Wishes Regarding Serious Illness Care" offers information on how to talk about COVID-19 and patient wishes regarding serious illness care.

CDC — "Training for Healthcare Professionals"
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention compiled a list of training webinars for health care professionals in the areas of clinical care and infection control, personal protective equipment, nonpharmaceutical interventions and emergency preparedness and response.

CAPC — Communication Scripts and Conversation Videos
The Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) developed a COVID-19 toolkit that includes communication scripts and conversation videos to guide clinicians as they support their patients virtually. Tools include practical advice on conducting determining conversations with patients and their families, and helpful scripts and conversation maps for care planning. CAPC also offers a comprehensive virtual care startup guide to implement telehealth and videoconferencing as part of a palliative care program.

Resources for Long-Term Care Facilities

This collection of resources provides national guidance and best practices on how long-term care administrators and caregivers should respond to COVID-19, such as shifting from in-person to telehealth services and utilizing POLST — portable medical orders — to assist in advance care planning.

CDC — "Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes"
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers guidance and recommendations on how long-term care facilities must act rapidly to protect residents, families and staff from serious illness.

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CMS — **"Long-Term Care Nursing Homes Telehealth and Telemedicine Tool Kit"**
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services presents national guidance to allow Medicare telehealth services for beneficiaries to receive medical services without having to travel to a health care facility. There are specific documents that are helpful for long-term care facilities to select telemedicine vendors, initiate a program and develop documentation tools.

NATIONAL POLST — **Guidance for Life-Sustaining Treatment**
Experts from the National POLST encourage long-term care facilities to utilize portable medical orders with its residents to identify goals of care, discuss potential risks and benefits of treatment due to COVID-19, and revise the document if necessary. The guidelines cover a plan of action for residents with or without a POLST.

Resources Available to the Community (At-Home Settings)
These resources allow older adults access to vital services to enable them to stay at home and remain healthy. The following community-based organizations help older adults stay financially secure and independent by providing such services as meals, transportation and caregiver support.

U.S. ADMINISTRATION ON AGING – **Eldercare Locator**
This resource is designed for older adults and their families to connect with community-based resources including support services, housing, insurance and benefits, transportation and other services. Using a ZIP code or city-and-state search will allow older adults to find help in their communities.

NCOA — **"Practical Tips for Meals and Other Package Delivery"**
Due to recent stay-at-home policies and social distancing recommendations, the National Council on Aging and Meals on Wheels of America have developed tips on strategies to stay safe while receiving deliveries of food or supplies at home to maintain safety and well-being.

CDC — **"MyMobility Plan"**
The MyMobility Plan tool, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, guides older adults in staying safe, mobile and independent. The planning tool is divided into three sections — self, home and neighborhood — and can be used by a caregiver or an older adult to help prevent falls at home and learn how to get around in the community.

CAPC — **Patient & Family Support Resources**
The Center to Advance Palliative Care developed a COVID-19 toolkit to help prepare patients and families in the event of a patient becoming seriously ill. The toolkit's resource, "Planning Steps for Patients & Families During the COVID-19 Crisis," provides suggestions on a medical care and medication plan. There is also a "COVID-19 Fact Check" featuring practical facts about the virus.

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