

Episode 12: Anne Tumlinson on Nursing Homes in the Pandemic, What Happened?

- 1:40 How did we get here?
- 2:00 No way to pay for someone to be cared for in a nursing home
- 2:14 Medicaid system
- 2:26 Funded by states in collaboration with Federal Gov't half states half Feds
- 2:52 All comes down to money
- 3:08 Profit and non-profit
- 3:26 As a society we have deliberately set out to underfund nursing homes
- 3:43 Paying \$150 or \$200 a day for complex care
- 4:12 Common to have more than one person in a room
- 4:20 Staff we pay to take care of them are making minimal wage - working in multiple buildings - multiple jobs taking care of lots of different residents on different shifts
- 4:54 Perfect spreading situation
- 5:15 Zero resources put towards testing and PPE in nursing homes
- 5:30 Could have made a really big difference is if the gov't would have prioritized funding for testing, isolation, and every staff member in full PPE all the time
- 6:22 Lack of investment, lack of re-prioritization
- 6:42 Hospitals releasing positive patients to nursing homes
- 6:59 Positive person comes into environment, tons of staff, people living on top of each other in underfunded situation, no PPE and have to take the positive patient because they have no where else to go
- 7:29 Senior living - private pay - well funded - own rooms - staff make more money - more resources for testing
- 7:48 These two settings wind up being more dangerous than they needed to be
- 7:54 Strategy has been to lock it down
- 8:36 Was there anything that could have been done differently?
- 8:50 Was no coordinated government approach to supplying PPE and testing - absolutely could have done something differently
- 9:11 This has exposed the only place to get this care is in institutional living

9:30 Safer at home but there are other problems there - even more isolation

9:58 More protected from the virus but other issues to overcome

10:07 Tough time to be an older adult in this country

10:25 Locking out the caregivers who actually are caregiving when they visit

11:58 We as a country - have to figure out how to manage the risk

12:30 Assisted living facilities

13:23 Isolated at 85, functioning is declining, cognition is declining rapidly

13:45 Incredible risk due to virus but also risk related to isolation

14:00 How do we de-isolate?

14:29 We still don't have enough info about the risk

15:15 How do people make decisions about risk?

16:33 Nursing homes and senior living facilities have to make decisions based on quality of life

17:38 Different levels of risk tolerance

18:38 Uncomfortable with the idea of thinking about the common good

20:56 We are magical thinking creatures - either I'll be fine or I'm going to get it

21:37 Masks

22:30 Colleagues advising wear a mask and stay away from people

23:10 In spite of this, these facilities are still getting calls regarding placement because it is so difficult to provide care at home

23:52 What is the plan going forward for these facilities?

25:00 Take stock of your surrounding community and start allowing things to happen

25:18 Begin at that point systematically put in place baby steps towards re-opening

25:26 Re-opening = de-isolation - allowing people to see each other internally, have dinner, have a family member to visit outdoors

25:54 If still no new cases then bring it indoors and so on

26:09 A safety valve - has been on high and then loosen it

26:46 Dependent on what's happening in broader community and your access to testing and PPE

27:02 Government's roles to fund testing and PPE

27:46 Wasn't there a plan?

29:06 Perfect storm - lack of ability to manage infection risk

29:29 Hand washing

30:10 We took infection risk very lightly

31:29 We have to adjust our thinking of how we interact
32:41 At the precise moment when it hit it hit everyone and then it was too late to get PPE's
33:25 Relying on back channel to secure PPE's
35:09 Profits over residents care - need to pay staff more - staffing at proper level - paying for PPE and testing
35:42 Internal corporate resources making sure energies are devoted to that
36:06 What can caregivers do?
36:37 What we need from Congress - prioritize funding for supplies and testing to long stay institutional settings
37:07 Phone call, write to your congressman
38:04 Can't continue to warehouse people in their old age
38:18 Need better way of taking care of frail older adults
39:16 You've lived a really long life and the way it's going to end is all alone
39:41 Barbaric maybe we come out of this less barbaric
41:01 There is a tipping point
41:35 Political talking point right now we're going to make sure older adults don't have to live in institutions
41:51 Nursing homes and consumers are aligned now - help making environment safe, more funding for services, create the old age that we all want to have
42:16 Hopeful that we are on the brink of important and positive changes



Anne Tumlinson is a nationally recognized expert in the economics of an aging society. She advises government officials, business leaders and investors on innovations in financing and delivery of health and long-term care to older adults.

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