



Staffing Shortages in Tribal Facilities: Past, Present, and Future

Keeping Our Elders Safe and Well Cared For
July 28, 2021



Disclaimer

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Uniting Nursing Homes In Tribal Excellence

About UNITE

UNITE (Uniting Nursing Homes in Tribal Excellence)

- Entering its 7th year of service to tribal nursing homes and tribal assisted living facilities
- Promotes evidence-based education and training, best practices, and quality improvement initiatives
- Works with any tribe desiring facility-based and/or home-based services for tribal elders to age in place



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UNITE's mission, status, and location

UNITE's mission

UNITE partners with Native Americans/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians to improve the quality of life of elders through the implementation of evidence-based practices and culturally relevant education and training

- 501(c)(3) with a board of directors
- Serving tribal elders since 2014
- Membership-based

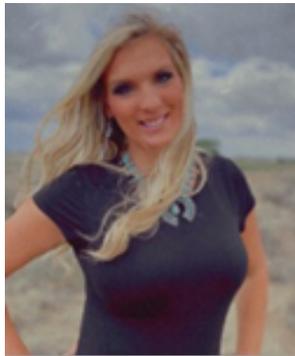


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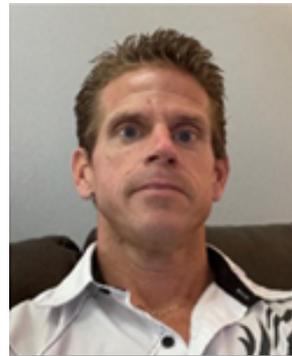
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Webinar objectives

- Learn the top 10 staffing challenges for tribal nursing homes and assisted living facilities
- Discuss past and present roles of nurse staffing agencies
- Learn about financial incentives during the pandemic and their impact on staffing shortages
- Hear about future staffing opportunities for tribal elder care



Top 10 staffing challenges

- Low and fluctuating census – residents leaving or not being admitted; vicious cycle of low census and inability to hire
- More regulations and mandates with no relief (e.g., CMS, CDC, OSHA)
- Staff turnover due to working short-staffed
- Low availability of trained staff on reservations
- Staff burnout
- Effect of PPE restrictions on work environment
- Higher costs (e.g., agency staff costs)
- The end of higher pay rates that were due to COVID-19
- Family obligations and requirements
- Staff safety concerns with driving to and working in remote locations



Past staffing concerns

Nursing

- Bias against long-term versus acute care
- Encouragement of new graduates and excellent nurses to consider what skilled geriatric care looks like

Housekeeping

- Past challenges of keeping up with knowledge and best practices
- New products
- New ways to clean
- Terminal room cleaning



Present and ongoing staffing concerns

Most tribal nursing homes are in rural and remote locations

- Family obligations
- Staff safety concerns with driving to and working in remote locations





Future staffing concerns

What would attract staff and incentivize them to work at tribal facilities?

- Generational concerns
- Coaching and correction concerns
- Balancing new COVID-19 mandates and regulations with dignity and respect
- Explaining hypocrisy and double standards
- Impacts of excessive regulations that make little sense or conflict with other laws or best practices
 - For example, Phases 2 and 3 require facilities to respect the voices of the elders, which staff do not see happening



Challenges in using temporary staff

“You want your own staff”

“In desperation, you use agency staff”

“Travel nurses are here 6–12 weeks, and then their contract ends”

Challenges:

- Continuity of care
- Knowledge of policies and procedures
- Knowledge of residents



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Has COVID-19 ruined nursing? Have we lost our compassion?

Companies working for employees

COVID-19 pay was not tied to tenure or credentials, so staff now feel entitled to the same pay received during the pandemic, which facilities cannot match

Employees working for companies

Before COVID-19, staffing was more stable



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“We don’t have youth taking classes”

- Case study in Rapid City, SD
- Case study in Central Wyoming College





Specific COVID-19 challenges leading to staff shortages and job dissatisfaction

- Facilities are trying to balance regulations with what is best for the elders
- PPE and isolation precautions were used for ALL residents
- Recommendations and mandates created a huge staff divide, leading to loss of candidates
- Older staff had limited ability to wear masks
- Older staff were kept off of the COVID-19-positive unit
- Facilities attempted to treat all staff the same way



Addressing burnout

- Staff were mandated to work overtime during pandemic
- Some staff were scared they would bring COVID-19 home
- Facility staff were angry that agency staff received more pay
- Facility staff worked short-staffed
- COVID-19 bonuses are no longer available
- Staff were asked to wear gowns, masks, gloves, and goggles for all patients
- Allocation of COVID-19 funds
- Staff working as travel nurses made good money but now suffer from PTSD



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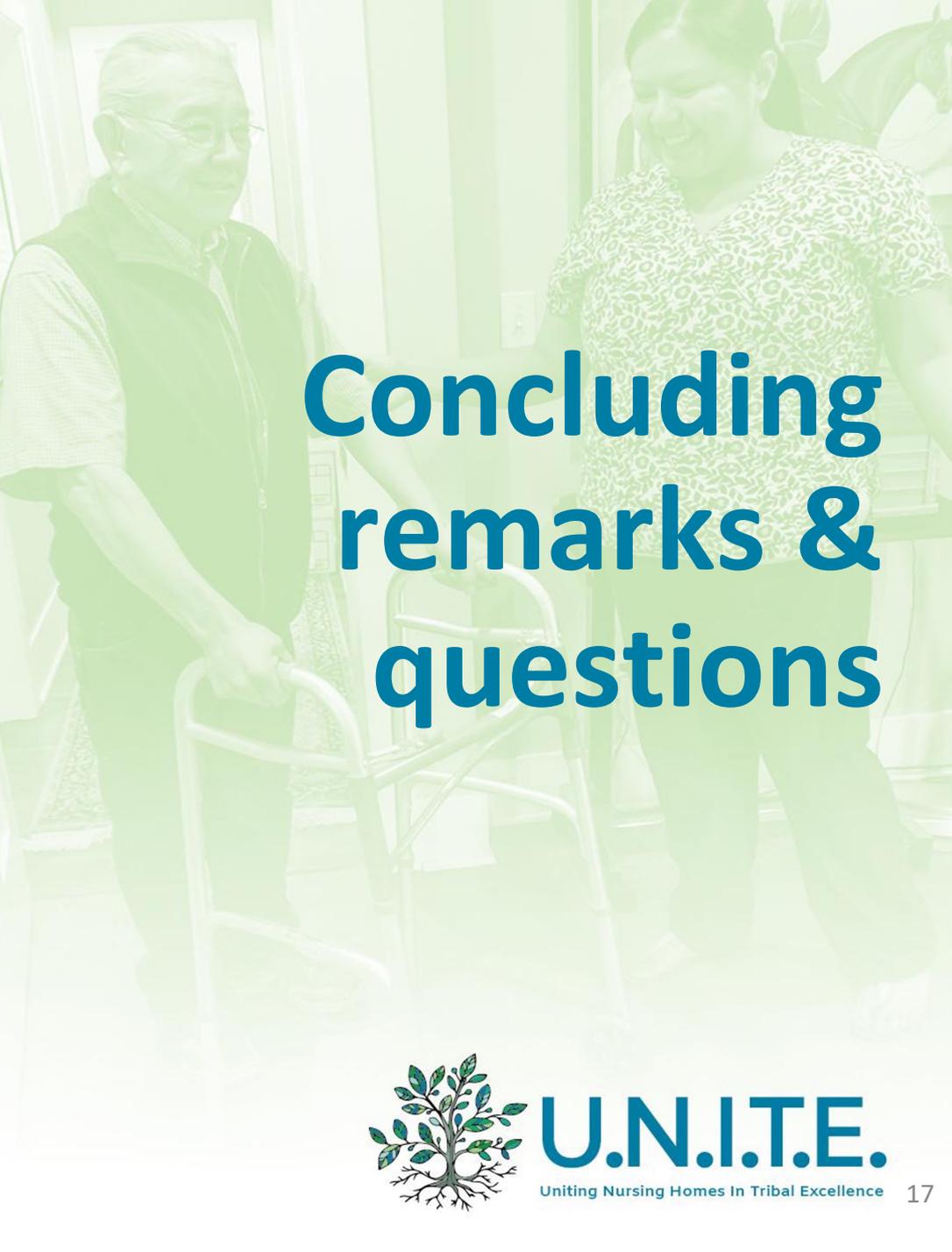
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Concluding remarks & questions



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