



The keystone to health care planning,
design and construction

Facility Guidelines Institute

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Dear **LeadingAge** Members:

The Facility Guidelines Institute (FGI), publisher of the *Guidelines for Design and Construction of Residential Health, Care, and Support Facilities*, has convened a committee of health and residential care providers, architects, engineers, AHJs, and researchers to assemble design guidance that can assist senior living communities in weathering future pandemics, weather, wildfires, and other emergency situations. The committee is responsible for creating a white paper with draft *Guidelines* requirements and lessons learned from past local and national emergencies over the past several years such as COVID-19, Hurricane Katrina, and the wildfires in California. This white paper will become the basis for a new *Guidelines* standard, released with the 2022 edition, for *designing* senior living facilities that can withstand emergency events and adapt during emergency conditions.

As a provider “on the front line,” we view you as the expert and thus are seeking your input to help us understand what happens in “real-time” during an emergency. We recognize that there are many important operational changes that you might implement, but we are charged with looking specifically at aspects that relate to the design of the building. The questions we are considering are these:

- Are there changes that you have made to your building(s) in response to emergency conditions that you feel worked well?
- Were there some changes that you made to your building(s) that you did not feel were successful?
- Are there changes that you would like to make to your existing building(s) or when planning a new building that you feel would help you be more prepared for emergency conditions in the future?
- Do you believe there are aspects of the design of your building(s) that have hindered your response to an event?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, we would very much appreciate it if you would respond to us with the following information:

1. What was the emergency (e.g. tornado, fire, pandemic, active shooter, etc.) you were facing?
2. What was/were the design/building issue(s) that you were attempting to solve that required a change?
3. What was the design intervention that you identified or made in response to the issue(s)?
4. For what type of senior living environment was the intervention identified or made?
5. What were the priorities for implementing the intervention (e.g., maintaining resident safety, providing family access, managing staff workloads, etc.)?

6. Were there other professionals involved in managing the emergency who provided directives on how to make decisions about the building and the occupants (e.g., fire department, law enforcement, health department, etc.)?
7. Were you able to document any outcomes (positive or negative) as a result of the intervention? If so, would you share examples of these outcomes?
8. Did you base your intervention on published research or established guidelines? If so, please identify the source.

Thank you for considering our request. Should you be willing to provide feedback, please send your response by July 7, 2020 to john@shoemithcox.com and include any drawings, illustrations, or photographs that you are willing to share. If you wish for us to keep this information confidential, we will honor your request and will not include any documents you provide to anyone outside the committee. If you have no objection to sharing these materials with a broader audience, we may ask you for permission to publish details and/or images in the FGI white paper.

Please be assured as we go through this process that we will be mindful of the need to balance safety precautions with the burden that regulations place on care communities.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

John Shoemith, AIA

Chair, FGI Emergency Conditions Residential Subcommittee