



AMN HEALTHCARE RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS CRITICAL TO COVID-19 RESPONSE IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

With a COVID-19 resurgence across the country, the state of Michigan is concerned with the sensitivity of aging patients in long-term care facilities – the most vulnerable population in this health crisis. Michigan has mandated regular testing among all patients and staff at some facilities since July. Since then, confirmed asymptomatic cases have spiked across the United States. As of November 16, 2020, [the state has seen 991 new resident confirmed cases](#) and 1,055 new staff confirmed cases of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities.

This influx has caused a staffing shortage, which is especially hard on organizational care settings that require a limited staff-to-patient ratio. Some long-term care facilities are on the brink of closure because they do not have the staff to care for their patients, which could have severe consequences for the surrounding health care systems.

Michigan has enlisted [AMN Healthcare and its full range of capabilities](#) in rapid response staffing, managed services, supplier relations and VMS technology to prevent any closures from happening. AMN is experienced in working with state governments across the country to execute their response plans, from ramping up capacity in existing facilities to expanding beds in non-traditional settings.

RESPONDING TO CRISIS

As of December 9, 2020, the state of Michigan is at [74% hospital bed occupancy](#) and rising. If long-term care facilities were to shut down, especially ones in rural areas, patients would be transferred to nearby hospitals and overburden the state's health care system.

Facility shutdowns would have a negative effect on patients as well. Long-term care facilities are considered home for many patients, with the mission to keep residents safe and comfortable. If a facility were to close, this would impact the patients' mental well-being and open them up to physical risks during transfer.

To prevent this strain and avoid any closures, the state of Michigan created the Rapid Response Staffing Program to provide short-term supports to long-term care facilities. Early in the fall of 2020, the program expanded statewide, and additional staffing agencies were brought on to assist with volume. While the program has been a success, challenges remain with limited staff availability and requests coming in faster than the staffing agencies could fill them. The State of Michigan contacted AMN with a plan to temporarily staff these facilities, with a mobile crisis teams that could be onsite within a couple of hours of a need being identified. In just one week, B.E. Smith, an AMN company dedicated to interim health care recruitment, put together multiple teams to help the state mitigate the crisis.

B.E. Smith used a similar model of the Rapid Response Staffing to build six mobile crisis teams that would best serve a long-term care facility. Each team consists of:

- **A Nurse Manager**
- **A Licensed Practical Nurse**
- **Six Certified Nursing Assistants**

So far, B.E. Smith has recruited 12 Nurse Managers for these teams. Additionally, two Executive Directors serve as a liaison to the state of Michigan and B.E. Smith to establish a process and procedure for this process – a first of its kind. Those leaders have been critical to streamlining deployment, analyzing staffing and communicating with the teams to ensure the best possible outcomes. Medefis, another AMN company, has played a significant role in quickly identifying candidates using its centralized approach to contingent labor management.

Since early November, these teams have been deployed to Michigan's most at-risk areas, which include the Upper Peninsula and rural areas along the Wisconsin border. The state determines where the teams will be deployed and uses them as a last line of defense for facilities that are within 24 hours of closing.

From there, the mobile crisis team will provide support for the facility, spending about five days stabilizing operations until the facility can get travelers and additional staff.

The mobile crisis team is meant as a short-term solution, which is committed to helping a facility out of a crisis. Even in a short-term capacity, the team serves as a cushion for facilities to find appropriate backup while full-time team members quarantine or await COVID-19 test results. The mobile crisis team also serves as respite for burnt-out team members who are working around the clock.

BUILDING SOLUTIONS ON RELATIONSHIPS

In April, B.E. Smith helped the state of Michigan stand up two field hospitals in 72 hours. Though the project was a first for both, it showed the potential of what a state could do with the full breadth of AMN's services. Much like the field hospitals B.E. Smith helped set up in Michigan, B.E. Smith relied on its full range of capabilities to help build this rapid response team: staffing, lodging, COVID-19 testing, and more.

With all parts moving in unison, the rapid response teams came together in short order:

- **Nov. 4:** AMN and the state of Michigan agreed on the process.
- **Nov. 6:** B.E. Smith's two executive directors began their assignments.
- **Nov. 11:** The first two rapid response teams were deployed and on the ground.
- **Nov. 15:** Four teams deployed.
- **Nov. 23:** Three teams deployed.
- **Nov. 30:** Three teams deployed.

Other states are also looking at these rapid response teams as potential solutions to their staffing issues. This puts a greater emphasis on streamlining the process for best practices, which has been changing as the weeks progress.

The state of Michigan has received notoriety for its innovative approach, leading to requests from other types of facilities for similar solutions. [The reputation of this project is spreading](#) and has helped the local community in positive ways.

A LASTING PARADIGM

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise and present unprecedented challenges, health care organizations need to continue to find unprecedented solutions. AMN has faced unique situations throughout this pandemic and has shown that its operations model is adaptable to effectively and efficiently put together a crisis response plan, even at the state level.

FOR MORE INFO please visit
AMNHealthcare.com/rapid-facility-response or contact leadershipsolutions@amnhealthcare.com