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2020-2021 CAASE Award Submission

CAASE Awards Submission

Submission Category:

Community Impact Program (open to any community-based program)

Submission Title:

Project Helping Hands

Contact Name:

Eve Grau

Organization:

Royal Ambulance, Inc.

Email:**Preferred**

eve.grau@royalambulance.com

Number of Annual Service Requests:

70,000

Number of Ambulances:

95

Business Type (check all that apply):

Privately Held Corporation

Project Participants (Names, Job Titles & Email Addresses of individuals involved in the project):

Steve Grau, CEO Sean Young, Director of Operations, Amri Pascual Operations Supervisor, 40+ EMTs who stepped up (can provide names of top 5 if needed)

Situational Analysis (Background of Project):

When COVID hit, like so many other businesses, we were significantly impacted. Hospitals stopped all elective procedures and kept their floors empty, to prepare for a spike in COVID patients. Meanwhile, many of our Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) were getting hit hard with COVID outbreaks, affecting both their patient population as well as their staff. Despite our rapid drop in call volume and business, we were committed to maintaining our workforce, and ensuring that our employees would not be impacted, during this difficult time. We were left with a clinically qualified workforce eager and ready to help the fight against COVID. Thinking outside of the box, and seeing the critical need for more assistance in the SNF's, we realized that we could pivot our services, and deploy our EMTs to alleviate the staffing shortages which resulted in a decline of patient-focused care. Royal quickly started Project Helping Hands, sending our EMTs to spend the day at impacted facilities to assist with bathing, feeding, caring, and sharing the love and compassion these patients so desperately needed. We had over 40 EMTs who volunteered, stepped up, and were ready for the challenge, despite the fear of COVID and health risks that they would be exposed to. We have since staffed thousands of hours in over 13 facilities in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Alameda, and continue to increase these numbers weekly. Project Helping Hands has brought together nurses, CNA's, doctors, leaders, and EMS all working together to care for our most vulnerable population. Our efforts resulted in an increase in patient focused care, allowed our SNF customers to stay afloat, and avoided the need to evacuate patients, which would have been a dangerous undertaking for all involved. Project Helping Hands also provided an opportunity for so many willing and ready EMTs, to use their clinical skills, their innate helping nature, and their desire to make a positive difference in the lives of our patients.

Project Goals:

--To avoid evacuations and shut downs in healthcare facilities due to low staffing/patient ratios --To care for the most fragile patient population in an unprecedented time of need--To augment the service of patient care that was being provided by the low staffing levels --To avoid company layoffs and reduction in shifts (thus income) for our EMTs

Planning & Implementation (describe process from the planning phase, including research, through implementation phase. Include the overall length of your project in weeks/months):

The Royal initiative, Project "Helping Hands," began when our Territory Managers began hearing of the impact of the pandemic on our SNF partners through media reports and text messages. Royal's CEO, Steve Grau received a call from a SNF partner asking if we could help with staffing. After taking a minute to grasp the severity of the situation, Steve immediately called a meeting with our Operations Team. We quickly posted a request to care for the COVID-positive patients to our internal social network at Royal, and the response from our EMTs who wanted to help and be a part of this initiative was overwhelming. Our Operations Team put together a task force, and we started deploying EMTs to spend the day at these facilities. The EMTs worked with SNF employees in the role of a CNA, helping with tasks such as bathing and feeding, as well as showing care and compassion to the residents. Project Helping Hands lasted for about 6 months, until staffing levels returned back to normal and COVID number started decreasing.

Results (Did you achieve your goals? How did you measure results?):

--Partner/Customer feedback and praise "Royal saved our lives. On March 30, we started having patients and staff getting sick, including myself. We had to go home and quarantine for the 14 days," Andrew Boyd, regional director of operations at Generations Healthcare said. "On April 9, EMTs started showing up and they have been here since today. You saved us from having to evacuate patients. Thank you so much." --Patient stories and praise--Gratitude and words of empowerment from our EMTs "Working at the SNF, I have the pleasure to know the patients and staff more on a personal level; I learned new skills from the CNAs, as they are the backbone of these facilities," said Royal EMT John Chu. --No layoffs were needed (we were able to maintain EMT hours and shifts and even gave everyone on the frontline a raise)

Impact (What impact has this project had on your service? Information can be given as narrative. However, if possible, please provide qualitative and quantitative information.):

Budget (Did you have a budget? Budget numbers can be provided as a percentage of overall operating or departmental budget.):

total EMT hours 3639 (doing a Helping Hands shift) payroll \$100,982

Supporting Documents #1:

Supporting Documents #2:

Supporting Documents #3:

Supporting Documents #4:

Supporting Documents #5:

Supporting Documents #6:

Comments:

Instead of uploading supporting docs here are links to reference
<https://www.ems1.com/ems-advocacy/articles/calif-ems-agency-deploys-providers-to-overwhelmed-nursing-facilities-Ph89vIVmxSePWviX/>
<https://www.hmpgloballearningnetwork.com/site/emsworld/press-release/1224325/calif-emts-deploy-nursing-facilities-relieve-staff/>
<https://ambulance.org/2021/01/12/royal-ambulance-in-2020/>
<https://skillednursingnews.com/2020/05/inside-an-ambulance-companys-plan-to-redeploy-emts-as-nursing-home-cnas-during-covid-and-beyond/>

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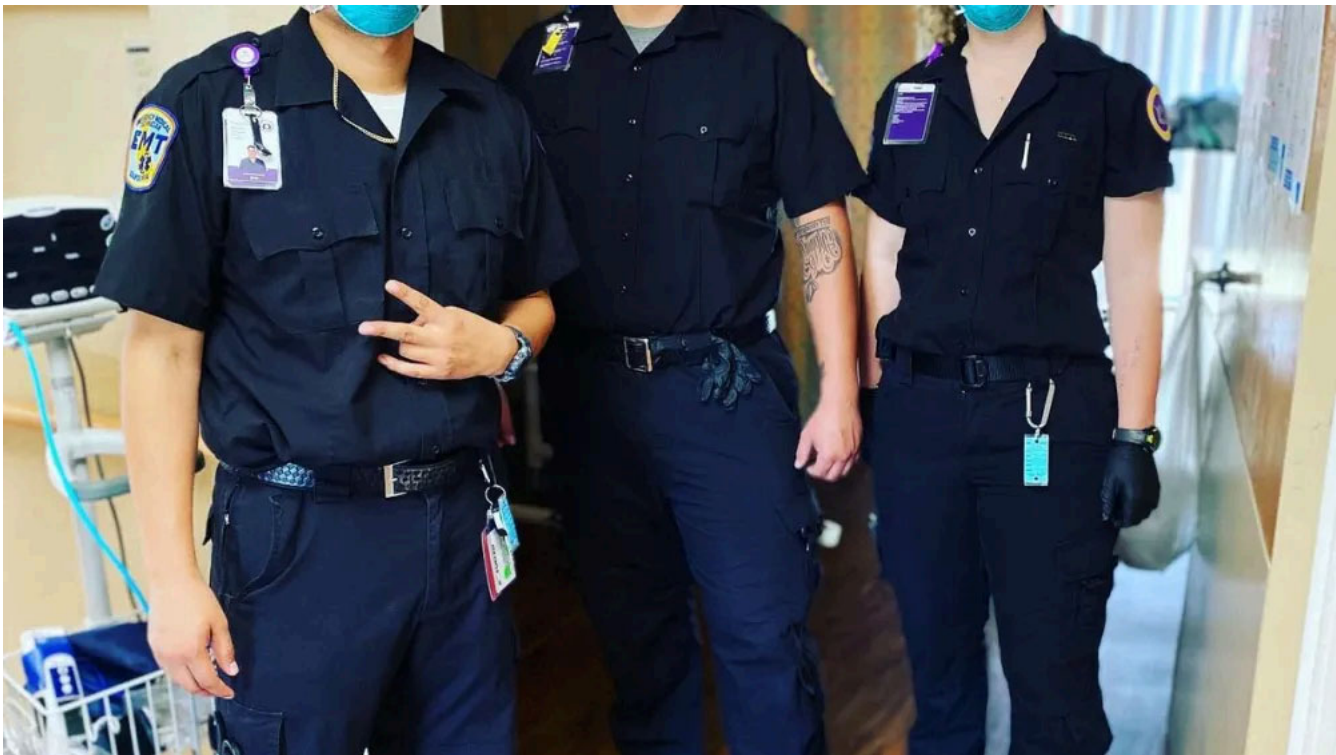
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Calif. EMS agency deploys providers to overwhelmed nursing facilities

EMS providers from Royal Ambulance stepped in to assist after staff members and residents at eight skilled nursing facilities fell ill

May 06, 2020 11:56 AM



EMTs from Royal Ambulance stepped in to help staff skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) in the Bay Area after several SNF staff members and residents fell ill.

Photo/Royal Ambulance

By Laura French

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — Skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) in California facing the prospect of evacuating patients due to the impact of COVID-19 were lent a helping hand by a local EMS agency.

Royal Ambulance sent 30 of its EMTs to staff eight overwhelmed facilities in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Alameda to help with daily care of elderly and vulnerable patients, according to a press release by the California Ambulance Association.

"To say that COVID had a disproportionate effect on the long-term care industry would be an understatement. In six states reporting data, deaths long-term care facilities account for over 50% of all COVID deaths," said Royal CEO Steve Grau.

The Royal initiative, called Project “Helping Hands,” began when Senior Territory Manager Mac McKissack heard of the impact of the pandemic on the agency’s SNF partners through media reports and text messages.

“When we got a call from an SNF partner asking if we could help with staffing, it took me a minute to grasp the severity of the situation,” said Royal CEO Steve Grau. “We quickly posted a request to care for the COVID-positive patients to our internal network, and the response was overwhelming.”

The EMTs work with SNF employees in the role of a CNA, helping with tasks such as bathing and feeding, as well as showing care and compassion to the residents.

“Working at the SNF, I have the pleasure to know the patients and staff more on a personal level; I learned new skills from the CNAs, as they are the backbone of these facilities,” said Royal EMT John Chu.

Grau said Royal’s EMTs have enthusiastically risen to the challenge of assisting during the pandemic crisis, saying they demonstrated the agency’s core values and embodied the “DNA of EMS.”

“Royal saved our lives. On March 30, we started having patients and staff getting sick, including myself. We had to go home and quarantine for the 14 days,” Andrew Boyd, regional director of operations at Generations Healthcare said. “On April 9, EMTs started showing up and they have been here since today. You saved us from having to evacuate patients. Thank you so much.”





Skilled nursing facility personnel show their appreciation for Royal Ambulance EMTs who joined their staff to assist during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photo/Royal Ambulance

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PRESS RELEASE

Calif. EMTs Deploy to Nursing Facilities to Relieve Staff

05/06/2020



PRESS RELEASE

The California Ambulance Association is highlighting the work of San Leandro-based Royal Ambulance. With call volumes currently dropping and a clinically qualified workforce ready and waiting to assist the charge against COVID-19, the staff at Royal Ambulance have left their vehicles behind and moved into skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) to help.

As reported on the national news, many SNFs nationwide have succumbed to COVID-19 due to proximity living with many staff members and patients testing positive. Royals CEO Steve Grau said, "To say that COVID had a disproportionate effect on the long-term care industry would be an understatement. In six states reporting data, deaths in long-term care facilities account for over 50% of all COVID deaths." Royal has been an ambulance service provider in the bay area for the past 15 years and has served over 300 post-acute facilities and over that time Royal has developed strong friendships and partnerships in caring for the elderly and the frail.

As COVID developed and spread in Bay Area facilities, Royal's Senior Territory Manager, Mac McKissack saw a local TV news report on COVID-related issues at a facility that Royal works with and after an exchange of texts identifying a staffing shortage, the first medics reported for duty. "When we got the call from a SNF partner asking if we could help with staffing, it took me a minute to grasp the severity of the situation. We quickly posted a request to care for the COVID+ patients to our internal network, and the response was overwhelming," said Grau. The program to employ EMTs in SNFs has been named Project "Helping Hands" and to date over 30 EMTs have staffed 8 facilities in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Alameda. The task at hand was to work in the role of CNA, teaming up with regular facility employees and assist with bathing, feeding, caring, and sharing love and compassion.

Of his time on duty within one facility, Royal Ambulance EMT, John Chu said: "Working at the SNF, I have the pleasure to know the patients and staff more on a personal level, I learned new skills from the CNAs, as they are the backbone at these facilities." Chu reported his most memorable moment with a patient was when there was initial difficulty in getting through to the gentleman and communicating and after a couple of days, he had the patient talking.

Project Helping Hands has brought together nurses, CNAs, doctors, leaders, and EMS all working together to care for the most vulnerable.

Clariza Bell, Administrator of East Bay Post Acute, Castro Valley said, "Royal saved our lives. On March 30, we started having patients and staff getting sick, including myself. We had to go home and quarantine for the 14 days. On April 9, EMTs started showing up and they have been here since today. You saved us from having to evacuate patients. Thank you so much."

Andrew Boyd, Regional Director of Operations for Generations Healthcare, said, "We absolutely need you guys and appreciate your willingness to step up."

Royal operates under four core values: Driven, Adaptable, Engaging, and Empathetic. John Chu identified that, "You have to be Driven to get up every morning knowing what you're dealing with. You must be adaptable to an ever-changing environment where the virus is everywhere. You have Engaged with the situation or accidents might happen. And lastly, be Empathetic to those who are having a harder time going through the crisis." Royal's EMTs have risen to the challenge with an act of courage and determination in what Grau accurately describes as the "DNA of EMS."

Disclaimer: The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the press release above belong solely to the company/vendor/author and do not necessarily reflect those of EMS World or HMP.

STAFFING

Inside an Ambulance Company's Plan to Redeploy EMTs as Nursing Home CNAs — During COVID and Beyond

By **Maggie Flynn** | May 14, 2020

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Asymptomatic workers who moved from facility to facility — and who, by nature of their work, from patient to patient — [were a major part of the reason](#) the Life Care Center of Kirkland in Washington had such a severe outbreak, and pose a major obstacle [to successfully keeping the novel coronavirus out](#) of the SNF setting.

And because of a shortage in testing across the country, it's difficult to get a clear picture of who may have the virus and who might not.

Those factors add to the difficulty of staffing a SNF adequately during the pandemic. After local reports of such shortages at SNFs that it served, the San Leandro, Calif.-based Royal Ambulance decided to redeploy some of its emergency medical technicians (EMTs) at facilities in need with a title change: The EMTs would work as certified nursing assistants (CNAs).

The program, called Project “Helping Hands,” had sent more than 40 EMTs to eight facilities for one or multiple shifts as of May 8, Royal Ambulance senior territory manager Mac McKissack told Skilled Nursing News on an interview recorded that day.

“Our peak kind of hit that second week of April, where a lot of our SNF customers were seeing staff shortages during shifts,” he told SNN.

When McKissack saw the names of facilities that Royal Ambulance worked closely with, he reached

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out to the administrators and found that their greatest need was staffing — which he pointed out had been the case even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Royal Ambulance was at the same time seeing a decline in call volumes, even as it had “a clinically qualified workforce,” [according to a press release](#). So McKissack reached out to a SNF with which Royal worked closely.

“Within two hours we had two EMTs deployed at that facility,” he told SNN on May 8. “And then we had two EMTs around the clock for 24 hours for about two weeks. That’s really how the project started.”

Alameda County, Royal Ambulance’s home county, approved the change of workforce, as did San Mateo and San Francisco counties; Royal Ambulance is working closely with the Alameda

In Santa Clara County, Royal Ambulance was still working to get approval as of last week. The county requested that the company create and present a plan for how the EMTs are trained to perform CNA duties, so Royal Ambulance developed a program that it has been testing on its EMTs; it's almost ready for presentation to the county, McKissack explained.

The EMTs are performing everything a CNA might do in the nursing home; the only constraint is that they cannot pass medications, he added. The EMTs themselves volunteer to participate in the project, but they still are paid; they simply go from a basic life-support ambulance shift to working in the SNF.

Royal Ambulance puts out available shifts that EMTs can pick up, and though it cannot always guarantee availability, it has built up a roster of about 30 to 40 people who are the first call for filling holes at a SNF.

"Some facilities are able to say: We need two shifts per day for the next two weeks," McKissack told SNN. "But honestly, most of the requests are for last-minute requests, when facilities have no-call, no-shows. That's the most of what we're getting, and those are one-offs."

Predicting the need is difficult, but McKissack said he has noticed is that it depends on when the SNFs get their facility-wide COVID-19 tests. Once facilities receive their tests, the EMTs tend to get called in. After a couple weeks, the usual staff can

the program is in place and the word has been around the Bay Area — they call me preemptively, saying they're going to get their tests soon, and they're anticipating nurses, CNAs, staff to choose to self-quarantine," he said.

And even though this program was sparked by the COVID-19 crisis, Royal Ambulance plans to keep it available to its skilled nursing customers after the pandemic passes.

"This is something that can be used," McKissack said. "It doesn't have to be for COVID. SNFs experience flu outbreaks, and if there's an outbreak in a facility, even if it's not related to COVID ... there's staff shortages. So we're happy to keep this option available for them."

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Maggie Flynn

When she's not working, Maggie enjoys running, reading, writing and sports, in no particular order. Favorite things include murder mysteries, Lake Michigan and the Pittsburgh Penguins.



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