

LOOKING AHEAD

healthier and stronger as a sector and as a region.

Lisa Newcomb, executive director, Empire State Association of Assisted Living



The COVID pandemic has clearly upended the assisted living business and the COVID-vulnerable seniors that we serve. As opposed to nursing homes, assisted living communities are deeply rooted in a social model of senior living and the pandemic has forced residents to lock down for ten long months and counting, significantly disrupting the active lifestyle that they are accustomed to. With the vaccine near, we are hopeful that residents can return to that lifestyle.

So often during this pandemic we heard the term "Long Term Care" being used by government and the media. Assisted living and nursing homes are not the same. However, a big issue for us at the start of the pandemic was when the NYS Department of Health was lumping the two models together and setting assisted living policy based on nursing home outcomes. ESAAL advocated fervently, and with significant success, that assisted living decisions be made based on our own data. Moving into 2021, we will continue the education process about the differences between the two models.

COVID's financial impact on the assisted living/adult care industry has meant huge, unplanned financial losses due to the required weekly testing of all staff at \$100 each, PPE and infection control supplies, and wage increases. Looking ahead, we know that the vaccines will be phased in to target our resident population and staff first. This is key to protect our most vulnerable seniors who live in congregate settings. It will also serve as a catalyst to return to some normalcy in operations, including resuming new admissions, which many communities chose to pause during the pandemic resulting in increased industrywide vacancies and lost revenue.

David Sterling, CEO, SterlingRisk



The winter months ahead will be a difficult time for Long Islanders as we wait for the COVID-19 vaccine to be deployed. Local health systems along with the hospitality sector will be particularly hard hit. However, come May and June, with restrictions finally lifted, it is likely we will see the kind of pent-up demand for services that comes along once or twice in a century — similar to when millions of GIs returned from World War II and triggered the boom years that followed.

In regards to insurance, we continue to

Katherine Heaviside, president, Epoch 5



One of the lessons learned from 2020 is that crisis planning is a small investment which can pay major dividends in protecting your reputation and your livelihood.

When first hit by a crisis, the public

will often see you as a victim; but if you don't move quickly and decisively to do the right thing -- and effectively communicate those steps with your important stakeholders -- you can easily become the villain. Even during a pandemic, we continue to calls from companies, schools, and associations to prepare a plan for them to move through the next crisis and emerge intact.

Moving into 2021, most businesses remain in a re-building mode, seeking to gain back market share, attract new customers and discover new avenues for their products and services. The move has already been underway for public relations to play a more active role, beyond generating press and publicity, in supporting companies' sales efforts and enhance the fundraising efforts of not-for-profits. That movement will only get stronger as organizations work with tighter budgets as the result of the pandemic, and recognize the return on investment of fully integrating public relations into their comprehensive marketing goals.



The outlook of our chamber of commerce in 2021 is very promising. The Long Island African American Chamber of Commerce has seen an increase in the number of corporations

supporting diversity during this downturn in the market.

Many African American business owners in the chamber have been experiencing hardship during this time, but the uptick in support from various sectors of society will help our industry rise above the challenges we currently see in the marketplace. As the New York District Office of the United States SBA 2019 Small Business Champion, our past work has prepared us to support businesses in a variety of capacities such as accessing resources including SCORE, SBA, Small Business Development Centers and EAP Centers.

Our chamber follows the national mandate of our national affiliate US Black Chamber, Inc's focus on access to capital, contracting, chamber development, entrepreneurial training and advocacy. As a business organization we recognize that businesses often have cycles of ups and downs in the economy, and as a business organization comprised of small, medium and large-sized businesses we must continually adapt to change. Our industry is composed of champions, and we fully embrace the entrepreneurial challenges that we face today.

Kevin Law, president and CEO, Long Island Association



As the entire country looks forward to putting 2020 in the rear-view mirror, it is likely that the beginning of 2021 will still be a difficult time. We will continue to grapple with the public

health implications and economic fallout from Covid-19. A bad start to 2021 may be unavoidable at this point, however, we do see light at the end of the tunnel.

We are optimistic that the second half of the year should be stronger as vaccines are more widely distributed to and accepted by the general population by the summer that should help unleash the pent-up demand from which we are all suffering.

This past year, the Long Island Association has helped guide our region through the devastating impact of Covid-19 and assist with our economic recovery. We were and will remain relentless in advocating for more federal assistance for small businesses.

As Washington contemplates additional measures to respond to Covid-19, it is imperative that a relief package includes funding for small businesses; state and local governments and transit systems like the MTA and LIRR; a second round of the Paycheck Protection Program; extended