Although research on factors mitigating the negative impact of strain/stress experienced by nursing home (NH) workers during the pandemic is emerging, there is no research on how COVID-19-related work stress and employer supports influence NH workers decision to resign. The purpose of this study was to investigate if high quality communication related to COVID-19 by the employer—a form of job support—can mitigate the impact of work stress on NH employees (N=1,730) decision to resign by optimizing employees’ preparedness to care for residents with COVID-19. Guided by the Job-Demands-Control-Support Model and employing path analyses, results indicate that higher stress was associated with greater likelihood of resigning, which operated through the path of communication quality and preparedness. While higher stress was associated with less optimal quality of communication, good quality of communication was associated with more optimal preparedness which was associated with reduced likelihood of leaving one’s job.

CHALLENGES REPORTED BY CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANTS DURING COVID-19: A QUALITATIVE STUDY
Emily Franzosa,1 Wingyun Mak,2 Orah Burack,2 and Joann Reinhardt2 1. Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, United States, 2. The New Jewish Home, New York, New York, United States

Certified nursing assistants (CNAs) who care for vulnerable nursing home residents faced unprecedented circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While staff and PPE shortages were ubiquitous and widely known, the focus of this qualitative work was to gain a broader understanding of the numerous challenges they faced. We conducted 10 remote focus groups with CNAs at 5 nursing homes (N=56) in downstate New York. Content analysis was conducted, and emerging themes identified. Results showed a myriad of emotional challenges including helplessness, fear, and anxiety. Operational challenges focused on lack of COVID testing capacity, information, and consistent guidance and support, in addition to staff and equipment. Individual challenges included personal experience of COVID illness and that of colleagues, and balancing high concurrent demands of work and family. These results are discussed in the context of developing recommendations to promote future safety, skill refinement and enhanced resilience in the workforce moving forward.

IT WAS TRIAL BY FIRE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING A STRONGER NURSING HOME WORKFORCE AFTER COVID-19
Wingyun Mak,1 Orah Burack,1 Kenneth Boockvar,1 Joann Reinhardt,1 and Emily Franzosa,2 1. The New Jewish Home, New York, New York, United States, 2. Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, United States

The COVID-19 crisis showed the urgent need for a unified, well-supported nursing home workforce. The objective of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experience of certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and administrators during COVID-19 to identify best practices moving forward. Six administrator interviews and 10 remote focus groups with CNAs at 5 nursing homes (N=56) were examined through directed content analysis. Based on priorities identified by CNAs and administrators, the following practices may be most impactful: 1) ongoing and responsive staff training; 2) transparent, direct, and two-way communication channels; 3) prioritizing hiring permanent staff to avoid shortages and reliance on agency staff; 4) building collaborative staff-management relationships; 5) providing flexible job benefits; 6) providing staff-centered emotional support resources; and 7) appraising COVID-19 innovations. Our results suggest that rather than returning to “business as usual,” nursing homes can draw on these lessons to build a more sustainable workforce and industry.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH STATE MANDATE OF NURSING HOME STAFF TESTING DURING COVID-19
Edward Miller,1 Molly Wylie,2 Lisa Beauregard,3 Pamela Nadash,4 Michael Gusmano,5 and Elizabeth Simpson,4 1. University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, Massachusetts, United States, 2. University of Massachusetts Boston, University of Massachusetts Boston, Massachusetts, United States, 3. Rutgers University School of Public Health, Rutgers University School of Public Health, New Jersey, United States

COVID-19 has presented challenges for nursing homes (NHs) and other congregate living settings which serve older adults at high risk for morbidity and death from the virus. This study identified factors associated with states’ adopting a mandate for regular staff testing for COVID-19 in NHs. Potential correlates included state government ideology and capacity, NH supply and demand, prevailing economic conditions, existing state policies, and NH characteristics. Findings indicate that percent for profit NHs is most strongly associated with adoption of a state staff testing mandate. Governing capacity (average legislative salary), percent population at risk for COVID-19, and existing public policy (percent Medicaid spending devoted to long-term services and supports (LTSS) were also associated with the probability of adoption. Based on these results, states with more proprietary facilities and greater capacities for government action, investment in Medicaid LTSS, and at-risk populations were more likely to mandate regular staff testing in NHs.

OBSERVING PERSONALITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE: HOW PERSONALITY INFLUENCES DAILY ACTIVITIES AND MOOD
Chair: Shiyang Zhang

Personality reflects the influence of older adults’ past experiences on their tendencies to engage in certain behaviors and generate emotions. An increasing number of studies...