Reduction in Falls and 50% Fewer Hospitalizations

By Susan Saldibar

Spring Hills Senior Communities is a thriving, growing network of assisted living, home care, and memory care communities, currently with 17 locations throughout the U.S. in Florida, New Jersey, Nevada, Ohio, Texas and Virginia. The vision of Alexander Markowits, President/CEO, since 1999, has been to grow responsibly. The organization is a great example of a community which has been able to successfully scale up in size, while continuing to improve the quality of care they provide.

Yet, Spring Hills once struggled with many of same issues that hamstring so many senior living communities; disconnected processes, tedious systems, outdated paper record keeping. The leadership team realized that, to achieve the high performance bar they set for their growing communities, they would need all hands on deck. That meant putting in place a unifying set of electronic health record or "EHR" tools and technology.

Here were their prime challenges:

1)   Physically travelling to each campus for compliance purposes and to assess and resolve issues was becoming less feasible.

2)   Accurately comparing and contrasting performance among communities without a centralized view was time consuming.

3)   Nurses and caregivers were wasting valuable care time walking to and from patients to the wellness center to access status and enter updates.

4)   Billing accuracy was impacted, as nurses lacked a convenient way to enter special care and services information, instead having to wait to enter data at the wellness center.

Senior Vice President of Operations, Elena Ortiz, and Vice President of Resident Services and Program Development, Lesa Scott met with senior management and key team members to hammer out a list of key goals, prior to reviewing EHR solution providers:

- Provide an interactive, collaborative mobile platform to reduce the need to physically travel to each location for non-critical issues.

- Provide a centralized, real-time dashboard to enable cross-evaluation and communication between all of the communities.

- Provide a convenient on-the-spot method for nurses and caregivers to enter notes and obtain status updates without leaving the resident area.

- Tightly integrate nursing procedures with billing for greater accuracy and transparency.

- Reduce or eliminate the need for paper.

Spring Hills Senior Communities selected PointClickCare's Senior Living Platform (PointClickCare is a Senior Housing Forum partner). Not only did the solution boast an excellent track record, it was modular and scalable, which would allow Spring Hills to implement it in manageable steps without disrupting day to day operations. The modules they installed were: Resident Care, Point of Care, Billing, and eMAR for medications management.

The implementation process went even smoother than anticipated and Spring Hills was able to roll out all 4 modules in 8 communities in less than a year! Both the operational and quality of care benefits exceeded the Spring Hills management teams' expectations.

Operational benefits:

- **Remote 24/7 Access:** The system can be accessed from anywhere 24/7. No longer does management need to get in the car and travel to each community to review, assess and report. Explains Lesa, "The Point Of Care app lets you review assignments across all communities in real-time. So you can call a community, and share the information online with nurses. As an example, 'You know that assignment is late; see it highlighted in red?'"

- **Centralized Dashboard:** Lesa creates a "view" and sends it out to the community directors each month. "With my dashboard, I can see everything from soup to nuts --- nursing documentation, profiles of residents, medical records, medication records, incident reports --- and I can take a sample of as many residents as I need to develop a full sense of what's going on." The dashboard helps her catch issues in advance, to ensure compliance for state audits. It also works as a motivator, spotlighting the communities with the "best performance dashboard".

- **Convenient kiosk access:** Nurses and caregivers are now steps away from a convenient kiosk for entering information and checking statuses. They no longer need to leave the resident area to log on to the computer in the wellness center.

- **Integrated billing:** Now that billing is tightly integrated with other records and nurses' notes, it has become more accurate and transparent. As Elena notes, "We are able to get 'buy in' from residents' families when increased level of needs are required because they can see the details of care and when a care level is crossed. There are fewer questions and no confusion."

- **Comprehensive reporting:** Senior management uses the reports to evaluate and determine what services are needed. "We use the data in the reports to create programs, such as activities to help prevent falls and increase residents' stamina," says Elena.

The net benefit of the above was a team that was more connected, less stressed and able to spend more quality time with residents.

That led to some even more dramatic results:

- **Reduction in falls.** By tracking programs for falls prevention incidents, they were able to better document and generate alerts. That translated to a decrease in falls for almost all of their communities. And for those lagging behind, they were able to identify where the issues were. They could then adjust and track improvement.

- **Hospitalization decrease of 50%.** The visibility over the performance of each community and oversight resulted in reaching the goal of 50% less hospitalization!

- **Risk reduction.** The ability to identify and track risk patterns in each community against incident reports gave them the information needed to focus on the areas where they could improve and minimize risk.

What did the users of the PointClickCare system have to say?

With any technology installation, the solution is only as good as it is easy to use. PointClickCare delivered. According to Elena and Lesa, even the most technology-challenged nurses love it. They both regularly hear comments such as "Easier than I thought!"

"One of our nurses is very 'old school' and hates computers," Lesa explains. "Totally afraid of new technology. Until PointClickCare. Now, she's our best user!"

Learn more about the success Spring Hills Senior Communities has had since implementing PointClickCare. Read Lesa Scott's success story now.