



# The Critical Process You Don't Want to Interrupt!

*By Susan Saldibar*

Do you ever get asked by a resident and/or family member how their medication regimen is handled during a power outage? It's certainly a question I'd ask. Even the slightest delay in administering medications can have a negative impact on residents who depend on them. And power outages happen all the time. We are hearing more about floods, fires, earthquakes (I live in Cali), and all kinds of things that make residents of assisted living communities and skilled nursing homes nervous. So, when they ask about your process during outages, hopefully, you have a good answer ready.

Here's one. MatrixCare (a Senior Housing Forum partner) has recently announced the development of their eMAR Offline mobile solution, which provides uninterrupted medications management when normal connectivity is disrupted. So, caregivers can continue to do their work without so much as a hiccup, ensuring that the correct medications and doses are delivered in a timely manner.

However, if you're like many senior care communities, during an outage you are still printing off paper medication instructions and reverting to manual meds passing. This is a tedious and error-prone process, even in perfect conditions. One can only imagine how stressful it would be in an emergency outage. Of course, once power is restored your staff must spend valuable time entering all the updated printed medications dispensation records back into the eMAR system. What a hassle. And that's on top of all the other things that need addressing after a power outage!

### **Mobility adds a level of flexibility traditional eMAR products can't touch**

What's great about the MatrixCare eMAR Offline mobile solution is that it's the first mobile app for meds management on the market today. A good move, given the increased interest in mobile technologies these days. Families of residents don't want to see assisted living staff clustering together in central stations sitting in front of computers. They'd rather see them walking around engaging with residents. The mobility of eMAR Offline mobile provides a whole new level of flexibility traditional offline eMAR products can't touch. That said, here is a rundown of some of the administrative pain points eMAR Offline tackles:

- Prevents medication errors or missed administrations due to being offline
- Enables continuity of care for residents when offline
- Prevents late documentation due to being offline
- Eliminates printing paper MARs when offline
- Eliminates paper drug monitoring and tracking when offline
- Removes the pain of reconciling MatrixCare with paper MARs when offline
- Provides accurate compliance reporting
- Negates the need for local desktop devices to access offline solution

How you answer the "medications in an outage" question may have a bigger impact than you think.

I guess the question operators should be asking themselves is how important uninterrupted care is to residents and staff. Are your nurses and CNAs able to quickly adjust to an outage and manage meds without skipping a beat? And does that go for junior caregivers as well? Do you have a system in place that keeps the process error-proof, should it be thrown into the hands of less seasoned staff in an emergency?

So, back to the original question. What do you tell residents and families about the potential interruption of their medications in an outage? Or, rather, what do they want to hear? Would it be, "We print off all the medications instructions and switch over to a manual method." Or

“We simply switch to our mobile system, no power needed.” Given the expectations of today’s consumers, which answer you give may have a bigger impact than you think.