Life Plan Community Solution | CareCommunity

CareCommunity Connect solves the puzzle of the resident admissions process

For staff at many life plan communities, piecing together a complete patient history of a new resident can be like trying to assemble a jigsaw puzzle.

Challenges

- Time-consuming intake process that frustrated staff.
- Uncertainty regarding complete patient records complicated continuity of care.
- Reliance on patients and their families for information that was not always complete.

Solution

- CareCommunity Connect.

Results

- Expedited admissions process with quick and easy access to complete medical history.
- Improved access to data critical to driving efficient care coordination.
- Improved referral partnerships through easier information sharing.

Connecting with hospitals for lab reports, collecting medication histories from physicians, and confirming prior appointments with specialists: it can all seem like a never-ending odyssey to make sure each resident will be taken care of appropriately.

At Presbyterian Manors of Mid-America (PMMA), which serves more than 2,400 residents at 15 life plan communities in Kansas and Missouri, the biggest challenges were the referral and intake process and continuity of care, said Jeanne Gerstenkorn, senior vice president of health and wellness.

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Jeanne Gerstenkorn, senior vice president of health and wellness, Presbyterian Manors of Mid-America

"It can have a very negative impact if you don't have all of the pieces of the puzzle at the same time," she said. "You don't have all of the pieces to put together, so you're not sure how many pieces it even has."
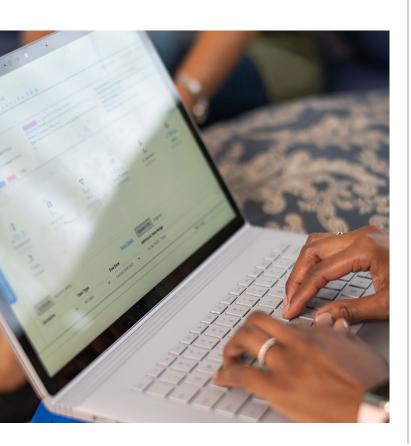
Adding to their frustration, staff would often discover that documentation they thought was new was in fact duplicate, or that information that seemed recent was actually several years old. On top of that, elderly patients don't always remember all of their prescriptions or office visits. Family members may be equally in the dark about important details.

"You're trying to put all the pieces together and you're not sure if this is normal for this patient,

if it's abnormal for that patient. You're not sure, should they be taking that medication, did they take the medication before, have they seen that specialist before, have they not," Gerstenkorn said. "There are a lot of unanswered questions."

As staff frustration continued to build, PMMA decided to implement CareCommunity to help improve data sharing with hospitals, physicians, and other healthcare providers via bi-directional continuity of care document (CCD) exchange. The fact that CareCommunity integrates with MatrixCare electronic health records made the decision easier, Gerstenkorn said.

"Implementation went really, really well. I think because it's such an easy product to use, it went much easier than I anticipated," she said. "The admission process is smoother because we are not paging through a lot of information and having to wait for it. There is less risk of error because we are sure that we are getting current information."

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Jeanne Gerstenkorn, senior vice president of health and wellness, Presbyterian Manors of Mid-America

"It's really key that CareCommunity promotes improved collaboration and data transparency," Gerstenkorn said. "We get a referral electronically, and if we select that resident, the information can go immediately into their EHR. We don't have to handle records multiple times, and it really speeds up the process." She added that having electronic access to the full resident records helps her staff know when to ask additional questions to evaluate whether her facility is the right setting for a particular resident, or to gather details about additional factors that could impact resident care.

But having transparent access to patient information is important to referral partners, as well, Gerstenkorn pointed out. "The other side of the equation is the hospital, the referring entity, who also wants to peek in 48 hours into the stay or after the resident comes out of the emergency department, to see how the patient is doing. Being able to share information back and forth is a two-way street in the referral relationship," she said.

Easy access to complete information also supports better care decisions that are specific to each resident's current condition, Gerstenkorn said. "I always say a hip fracture is not a hip fracture, because everyone is a little different coming out of the hospital with that. CareCommunity has really enabled us to tailor the care we provide, even before they get in the door. And it helps reduce errors, too," she said. "We don't have to worry

about copying information that someone else has copied already and risking errors like getting the Medicare number wrong or the milligrams on a dosage for medication. Having this helps prevent that."

Gerstenkorn has this advice for others who may be interested in implementing CareCommunity: expect the software to help not just with continuity of care on the admissions side, but on the referral side as well. "You would really be surprised at how much you use the solution," she added.

CareCommunity Connect is a comprehensive data-sharing care management solution that unites all caregivers with permission-based access to information. By collecting information from electronic medical records and other sources across provider and care-setting boundaries, caregivers can make informed decisions and coordinate care in real-time through a single access point. From referral through intake and then supporting the medication reconciliation process with the appropriate information, Connect saves providers valuable time and resources as residents transition across the care continuum.

Information also flows in both directions. Hospitals and providers don't just share their patient data; they can receive information from the community as well. CareCommunity takes information from the MatrixCare EHR via a CCD and makes it available to other EHRs such as Epic, Cerner, Meditech, eClinical works, NextGen, and others. This is made possible by the MatrixCare relationship with Carequality and the CommonWell Health Alliance.

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