Case Study:
Analytic Tools — Implementing an EHR at Newly Acquired Locations

SENIOR SOLUTIONS
MANAGEMENT GROUP

ecp

Category:
◆ Analytic Tools

About the Organization

Organization Name:
Senior Solutions Management Group (SSMGRP)

Main Contributor:
Christina Trentham, Executive Vice President of Operations and Clinical Services

Organization Type:
Independent living, assisted living, memory care, residential, personal care home, respite care

Organization Description:
Senior Solutions Management Group is a company born to provide excellent customer service and satisfaction to the senior residents it is entrusted to care for and the clients which it is accountable to serve. Our core beliefs stem from simplicity, which we ingrain in everything our communities do, and peace of mind to seniors.

Project Description

Successfully guiding a growth trajectory from three communities to 40, Senior Solutions Management Group partnered with ECP to implement their EHR and eMAR systems. Playing a significant role in their growth strategy, ECP's software and innovative integration program cut the implementation time for the last nine communities in half.

Implementation Approach

With communities in eight states, Senior Solutions' mission is to provide high-quality resident-centered care while highlighting the personal approach for both residents and staff members. Streamlining operations such as the EHR and eMAR supports this mission while helping us better navigate the acquisition process and ensure compliance in each state.

Responsible for the integration of new systems at Senior Solutions, Christina Trentham, a nurse of 30 years and executive vice president of operations and clinical services, was familiar with what other software companies had to offer but felt they were missing customization capabilities. ECP provided the ability to create a custom program that would benefit both the residents and staffing needs.

When acquiring the last nine communities in four different states, Senior Solutions relied on ECP's implementation program, which allowed for a train-the-trainer approach as well as step-by-step directions on how to properly integrate systems.

Utilizing online, classroom-style training, the ECP implementation manager walked through the entire program the first day, highlighting system settings, how to complete assessments and care plans, as well as methods for assigning tasks and responsibilities. The second day, the Senior Solutions' team was able to chart and pass meds in ECP in real time. The manager was there to answer any questions and if anyone got stuck, he would walk them through the process again.

Outcomes

Reduced integration timeline: What had taken Senior Solutions on average 120 days to accomplish was now being completed by ECP's teams, training, and software in half the time. "We fully trained and completed pharmacy integration for nine properties with an average of 75 to 150 residents and 50 to 60 staff members at each location—within 60 days," said Trentham.

Meeting compliance in multiple states: Senior Solutions currently operates in several states with different compliance requirements for each. ECP created an addendum option for each state's location to be attached to an individual's assessment. A state's specific criteria is established for each addendum and is automatically attached to the care plan. The software is also used for monitoring training courses and certifications of staff for state compliance.

Pharmacy integration: The company realized a reduction in medication errors of more than 50%. In addition, the nursing staff can now communicate directly with the pharmacy about any medication discrepancies, refill requests or new orders. Saving valuable time, all orders are housed in the ECP system.

Impact on daily operations: ECP software allows for tracking assessments, incident investigations, observation notes, and medication passes remotely for multiple locations. This level of oversight was extremely vital during COVID-19, as Trentham was able to follow each community's day-to-day operations. "We have communities that don't have an active nurse in the building, so I could perform triage and make the call whether a higher level of care or hospitalization was needed," she said.

Customized assessments and care plans: ECP's system includes spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental health categories—painting a more complete picture that is representative of the resident. The care plan is directly populated from the assessment by simply checking a box. The plan can then easily be reviewed for any needed adjustments or customized further to meet the expectations of the physician, resident, and family.

A system that allows drilling down to the specifics: "We can document that the family wants Bath and Body Works lavender lotion applied to their loved one's feet, wrapped in socks and then tucked into bed," Trentham said. "Imagine the difference that makes to a family to know their loved ones are being so well cared for."

ECP alert notifications: Whether it's an omission of medications or care, alerts allow Senior Solutions to better understand its overall effectiveness in accomplishing its commitment to service.

Access to real time data in an emergency: Senior Solutions operates in a few states that are located in hurricane zones. If there's an evacuation, it's much easier to pick up a laptop and go instead of gathering and transporting 100 charts.

Benefits of the train-the-trainer approach: Training clinical managers and frontline staff to instruct others saves time and money. This can also serve as an incentive for longevity and retention as other staff members have the opportunity to be the expert and develop a sense of leadership, purpose, and pride in their contribution.

ECP University: While Senior Solutions places a priority on its staff members' compassion, they also require knowledge and skills. Caregivers range from RNs to care attendants but with ECP's resources, information is always available—for instance, a video on how to complete an assessment or demonstrate how to properly dispense a medication. With the EHR system and short videos, a team member can pause during a shift and review a feature or learn more about a resident so they can personalize the care. It's also invaluable in allowing the staff to use when explaining a new medication or diagnosis to the family.

Achieve business goals: ECP systems can help communities determine if additional education, training, or staff is needed. Information is available to identify and track occupancy, move-in cycles, and discharge reasons, as well as to distinguish who is making the senior living decision—the individual or adult children.

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

There is always a learning curve when transitioning to a new software program and communities will want to plan and coordinate around this adaptation. However, the staff at Senior Solutions found ECP software to be organized, detailed, and easy to learn, appreciating that all the data on a resident is housed under one file.

ECP grew with Senior Solutions and its changing needs. Senior living communities benefit greatly by working with a supportive software provider who understands the fundamental role that customization plays to support communities in serving their residents well.

Lessons Learned / Advice to Share with Others

Senior Solutions found great success introducing the ECP system to all team members. Those who interact with residents on a day-to-day basis, including the dietary, housekeeping, and maintenance departments, can enter data as they also are providing one-on-one care, and actually see the residents more than the nurse does.

Not everyone on your team needs access to all information. Set up your user groups based on their job responsibilities, which will save a lot of time when learning the implementation process.

Shorten the learning curve by having staff watch the videos before the training. Taking advantage of ECP's training site afterwards to practice entering resident data before they go live or actually passing medications will help build their confidence in the system.

Be prepared for others outside of your community to love your new system. Senior Solutions found that staff members, surveyors, and even emergency room physicians appreciated the depth of information available. "If a resident needs to go to the ER, the face sheet will include when the last medication was administered. We can also add the assessment or care plan," said Trentham.

Know that you can rely on ECP's implementation managers and the on-site support. "I thought I knew everything about the system, but I've continued to learn and grow with the system as well," said Trentham.