

# Navigating the New World of Senior Living & Pharmacy Partnerships





**The COVID-19 pandemic complicated every facet of senior living — and perhaps nothing changed more than how operators work with their pharmacy partners.**

That's no small statement. Because the pandemic caused many prospective senior living residents to delay their moves into communities, a resident population already rife with clinical needs grew more vulnerable. With that higher acuity came a host of new challenges in medication management — and an urgent need for pharmacy integration.

The pandemic has also radically changed the practices of staffing, compliance and clinical services while increasing the amount of data senior living companies must collect and monitor. With inflationary pressure and other factors leading to rising expenses, today's senior living operators must do more with less.

Given these new complexities in senior living, it's clear that operators need all the help they can get. In this white paper, **you'll learn how senior living operators can get the most out of their pharmacy relationships, and the connection between pharmacy and resident care.**

## DIGITAL RECORD-KEEPING SURGES IN THE POST-PANDEMIC LANDSCAPE

### *How Operators Improved Their Pharmacy Relationships*

Medication management and pharmacy integration have always been complex challenges for senior living operators, and COVID complicated these challenges by creating new needs for tracking resident health and staff whereabouts. Early in the pandemic, operators needed real-time information to make the best decisions. COVID-19 testing, monitoring the whereabouts of workers and residents and staying on top of fast-changing regulations all became routine overnight.

Then in 2021, operators gained a whole new challenge: administering and tracking COVID vaccine doses among residents and staff. Pharmacy partners became invaluable. Yet as helpful as these partners are, they require a steady stream of data to do their jobs. For operators using multiple record-keeping systems — or even worse, pen and paper records — pharmacy coordination can be a challenge.

That is partly why senior living tech provider Yardi saw a flood of senior living operators looking to digitize their record-keeping with the outset of the pandemic, with 50% of their clients using interfaced eMARs in 2020 alone. Whereas integration with pharmacy partners may not have been as well recognized before the pandemic, today it is a high priority for many operators.

"The majority of our client base moved to a model with full pharmacy integration," says Yardi Director of Healthcare Solutions Fil Southerland. "In the case of assisted living, they can receive the medication orders directly from the pharmacy systems via our HL7 interface."

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## WHY ELECTRONIC PHARMACY COORDINATION MATTERS IN 2023

### *Addressing the Rise of Electronic Prescriptions*

A typical senior living resident might see multiple specialists who prescribe different medications to manage their health. But how many medications a resident is taking, and which they are taking, is not always clear to staffers at their senior living communities.

For operators without pharmacy coordination, managing that information alone can be time-consuming.

Electronic-based prescriptions for controlled substances (ECPS) have also been on the rise in recent years. Now, residents are being prescribed medications — sometimes narcotics — via telehealth. That can be a problem for record-keeping.

“What we often see in long-term care is you’ll have a physician prescribing to a long-term care pharmacy, but the EHR system will not be aware of that order, until the long-term care pharmacy processes and fills it,” Southerland says.

All of these pressures can help create care and technology “gaps” at the community level where resident needs are not met as well as they could be, increasing the chance for medication errors.

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**Fil Southerland**

Director of Healthcare Solutions  
Yardi



## TOP BENEFITS OF A SINGLE, CONNECTED PHARMACY SOLUTION

### Staffing, Compliance and Clinical Made Right

Having a single, connected pharmacy solution can help operators in primarily three areas: Staffing, compliance with regulations or other requirements, and offering clinical services.



Senior living providers making the switch to a new pharmacy or electronic record system often must deal with reconciling all of their outstanding medication orders. For operators going it alone, the process is often time-consuming and requires many hours of sorting through a backlog of reconciliations.

But there is another way. If senior living operators can enlist the help of their pharmacy partners — something Yardi's EHR can allow them to do — that can ultimately save them time and money.

Operators that have a handle on what staff are doing and when they are doing it can also more appropriately set staffing levels as efficiently as possible. It also can help operators better assess the risk profile of the residents in their communities.

Using a tech-based solution for record-keeping is also a must-have for new staff entering the senior living industry, says Diane Dayne, Director of Clinical Informatics, Business Strategy at Chicago-based Senior Lifestyle. While employees of the previous generation may have used pen and paper, workers today have a different response.

"I think we would lose people who applied for positions if we did not have electronic records, health assessments or EMARs," Dayne says.

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Director of Clinical Informatics  
Senior Lifestyle



## COMPLIANCE

In 2023, regulations around medications in long-term care are constantly changing, and it's hard for care staff to keep up with those needs. Having a single-point solution that tracks both care and medication can help automate as many processes as possible and stay on top of regulatory compliance.

"By having one system in place, clinical, operations and investors all operate from the same page, resulting in huge efficiency gains and risk reduction," Southerland says.

Senior Lifestyle operates in multiple states across the country — states with different and changing regulations. Assistance keeping track of regulations helps the operator avoid legal or operational headaches down the road.

"We know right away if the pharmacy has changed anything or if we need to immediately address something," Dayne says. "This decreases medication errors."



## CLINICAL SERVICES

Pharmacy coordination can also help operators in their quest to monitor or even lower the amount of medications that residents take on average, according to Southerland.

"A pharmacy taking an active role in the medication review process is hugely beneficial to the residents," he says.

Case in point: Senior Lifestyle uses Yardi's electronic solutions to help stay current with large national pharmacy partners like Symbia, PharMerica, Omnicare and Remedi.

Doing so is invaluable to resident safety, Dayne says, and adds an important layer of oversight that might not otherwise exist. It also helps the operator determine pricing for medication packages by closely monitoring the medications being passed to residents in their communities — and in many cases, they can save money with a single-point solution.

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"Typically, it will work where if you have six meds, you pay one price, but if you have 20 meds, you pay another price," Dayne says. "So we want this to give us a better picture of whether or not we're staffed correctly — maybe we need more. Maybe we need less. With this, we're working on that."

"Medications are one of the highest cost areas for your operations, and when we've looked we've found huge differences between what is being billed and assessed versus what's actually happening with medications," Southerland adds.

Another big benefit to using a single-point pharmacy solution like Yardi's is that it helps operators track and fill "holes" in their records, such as if an employee administered a medication but didn't record doing so.

"With Yardi, we can see that on a dashboard that tells us how many missed meds we have and how many are late," Dayne says.



## THE YARDI DIFFERENCE

Yardi focuses on connecting all aspects of senior living operations, from activities and hospitality to clinical services and financials. That is different from other software companies, which may not take such a broad-based approach.

"We really go for a full-court press approach, where we want to be able to unify and have each of these different business elements that make up our client entities be able to play together and understand how each one impacts the other," Southerland says.

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR PHARMACY JOURNEY

Given the new complexity of senior living in the post-COVID world, it's clear operators need a single-point solution for all of their needs. To learn more about how Yardi can help, contact at:

[www.yardi.com/about-us/request-information](http://www.yardi.com/about-us/request-information)

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