

WORKFORCE IN CRISIS: 4 Ways Technology Supports Senior Living Staff



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 **YARDI**

 **SENIOR HOUSING NEWS**

As the COVID-19 health care crisis shifts for senior living providers on the heels of widespread vaccine distribution, most providers are facing new challenges. In particular, the staffing environment is causing more stress for providers than ever before.

Many are turning to technology, including electronic health records (EHRs) and medication management tools, to ease the burden on staff and drive operational efficiencies in key areas.

This ebook will outline four key areas where senior living providers are utilizing technology to support their staff and residents during this unprecedented staffing crisis:

- ① An EHR
- ② An eMAR
- ③ Pharmacy management
- ④ Interoperability



EASING THE BURDEN WITH AN EHR

In the current workforce crisis, EHRs are among the most powerful technological tools for senior living providers to harness. By leveraging the features of a well-designed EHR, providers can alleviate staff burdens in three key ways.

EHR BENEFIT #1

Driving efficient assessment and care plan workflows

Paper-based senior living operations often rely on inefficient workflows starting right from an initial resident assessment. In a typical model, a clinician might:

- 1. Document a comprehensive assessment**
- 2. Manually translate that assessment into a service plan**
- 3. Use the service plan to create a caregiver assignment sheet**

An EHR such as Yardi's will automatically generate service plans and assignment sheets based on the initial assessment, which can be customized to reflect unique resident needs and preferences.

"It is a one-stop-shop," says Brenda Abbott-Shultz, RN, VP of Resident Services at Sagora Senior Living, which operates roughly 46 independent senior living, assisted living and memory care communities in Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, Alabama and California. "You enter the information once and it pushes to all the places that it needs to go, decreasing duplication — and sometimes triplication — of data entry. This really saves us valuable time and effort."

EHR BENEFIT #2

Promoting dynamic staffing management

With recruitment and retention tougher than ever, senior living providers must optimize their staffing practices, from recruitment to hiring to placement.

Too many communities rely on static models, in which they staff a fixed number of caregivers for each shift. An EHR can be a game-changer, by drawing on daily charting information to determine staffing based on changing resident acuity and day-to-day needs.

"If you have a caregiver shortage on a certain site, Yardi EHR allows you to reallocate tasks on the fly and maintain continuity of operation," says Fil Southerland, Director of Healthcare Solutions at Yardi.

"There's just a lot more opportunity for growth and development, and of course efficiency, when you start utilizing an EHR."

Kim Smart

Director of Systems & Support
Anthology Senior Living

EHR BENEFIT #3

Delivering superior visibility for directors

EHRs have the capability to generate reports, improving transparency and empowering staff at the director level.

Rather than sifting through charts or requesting faxed documents, directors can easily review reports to assess staff performance and identify areas where operational changes are needed, or where frontline staff could benefit from more education or training.

"There's just a lot more opportunity for growth and development, and of course efficiency, when you start utilizing an EHR," says Kim Smart, Director of Systems & Support at Anthology Senior Living, a multi-state operator of 32 independent living, assisted living and memory care communities.

EASING THE BURDEN WITH AN eMAR

The benefits of an EHR are amplified when the technology is integrated with an electronic medication administration record (eMAR). An integrated eMAR eases staffing burdens in three ways.

eMAR BENEFIT #1

Supports optimal staffing levels

Medication management is a key staffing driver within a senior living community. In paper-based operations, variances between care plans and actual medication administration can occur as resident acuity changes but documentation revisions lag.

As a result, a provider might be staffing too many, or too few, med techs.

An integrated electronic system addresses this situation by coupling medication administration information with the care plan.

"As a result of implementing electronic charting and data insight, operators have regained tens of thousands of dollars, monthly, in cost recovery," says Yardi's Southerland.

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Fil Southerland

Director of Healthcare Solutions
Yardi



eMAR BENEFIT #2

Streamlines caregiving and medication management

An integrated EHR and eMAR aids senior living staff by providing them easy access to the information that is critical to their job.

At Anthology, for instance, many caregivers are also licensed as med techs, and vice-versa. An integrated eMAR allows these workers to have rapid access to both care and medication-related information and tasks.

This helps enable coordination if, say, a medication change requires a lifestyle change for a resident. And staff feel empowered to do their jobs more effectively.

"Say a resident is walking down the hall, and you see them with a soda, and you know that resident needs insulin, and they're also supposed to be on a specific sugar-free diet. You can say, 'Wait a second, that resident shouldn't have that,'" says Anthology's Smart. "Workers just have more knowledge, and that becomes helpful in caring for our residents and being better supporters of their health."

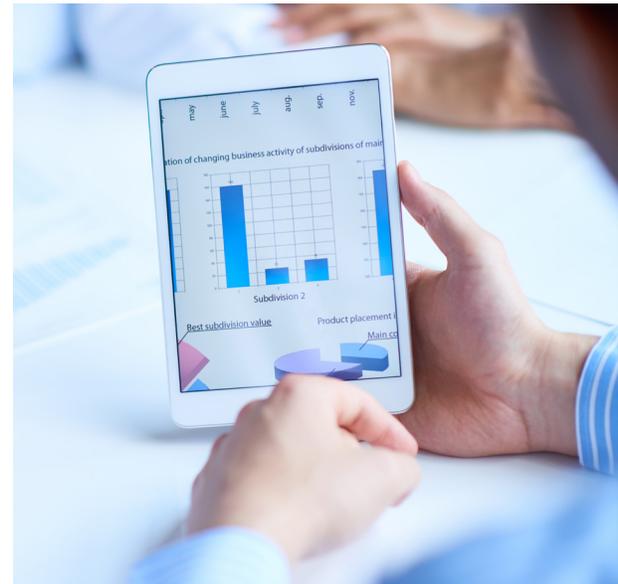
eMAR BENEFIT #3

Enables emergency staffing patterns

Senior living providers have had to rely on contingency plans related to staffing at various points during the COVID-19 crisis, as workforce shortages have been caused by illness, burnout, workers leaving for personal reasons and tight labor markets.

A user-friendly eMAR that is integrated with an EHR makes it easier for agency staff and other workers filling in on a temporary basis to provide high-quality care.

"We cross-trained the key associates in our communities in the ways of managing medications, in case they needed to assist — and in many of our communities they actually did have to assist," says Sagora's Abbott-Shultz. "They were very nervous, of course. But once they got into the system, and they saw how intuitive it was to use, they became more confident and performed the med passes extremely well."





EASING THE BURDEN WITH PHARMACY MANAGEMENT

Yardi eMAR also eases staffing burdens by integrating with top senior living pharmacies.

Pharmacists are able to send medication orders to communities, while senior living staff work through intuitive software interfaces, accelerating medication verification and refills.

"There can be a lot of inefficiency where you might have refills coming in that weren't requested or for a resident who has moved out. Or you might have discrepancies between the medication record the pharmacy has and what the record is with the community," says Southerland. "So, interoperability with the pharmacy is a huge efficiency driver, and saves nurses hours monthly, taking care of all that reconciliation that would happen in a paper process."

Smart particularly appreciates the bi-directional setup that Anthology has with one of its pharmacy partners, which enables the provider to discontinue orders, submit refills and take other actions directly through the system.

EASING THE BURDEN WITH INTEROPERABILITY

Senior living providers are dramatically easing staffing burdens through EHRs, eMARs and pharmacy management technology that work together — but providers are not stopping there.

They are gaining tremendous upside from interoperable systems across all facets of operations, from customer relationship management (CRM), to accounting and billing, to website support, business intelligence and insurance claims systems.

Yardi is a leader in the interoperable technology revolution, offering a variety of integrated solutions for senior living providers.

"Our strategy is to create a single-stack solution, for increased data efficiency and operational intelligence," Southerland says.

Yardi typically replaces between 5 and 15 standalone solutions for clients

"Our financial platform, our sales platform, our clinical platform are all on Yardi — to me, that's crucial," says Abbott-Shultz. "Historically, especially for the clinical teams, it was incredibly challenging using multiple systems that just did not share information or data."

The 21st Century Cures Act created the conditions to further extend interoperability by connecting with systems beyond the walls of the senior living community.

"Within our product, you can now query this entire network for 2.5 million health care providers in the U.S. and pull in any information about the resident," Southerland says. "You can get a longitudinal record of what that resident's needs have been."

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Brenda Abbott-Shultz
RN, VP of Resident Services
Sagora Senior Living

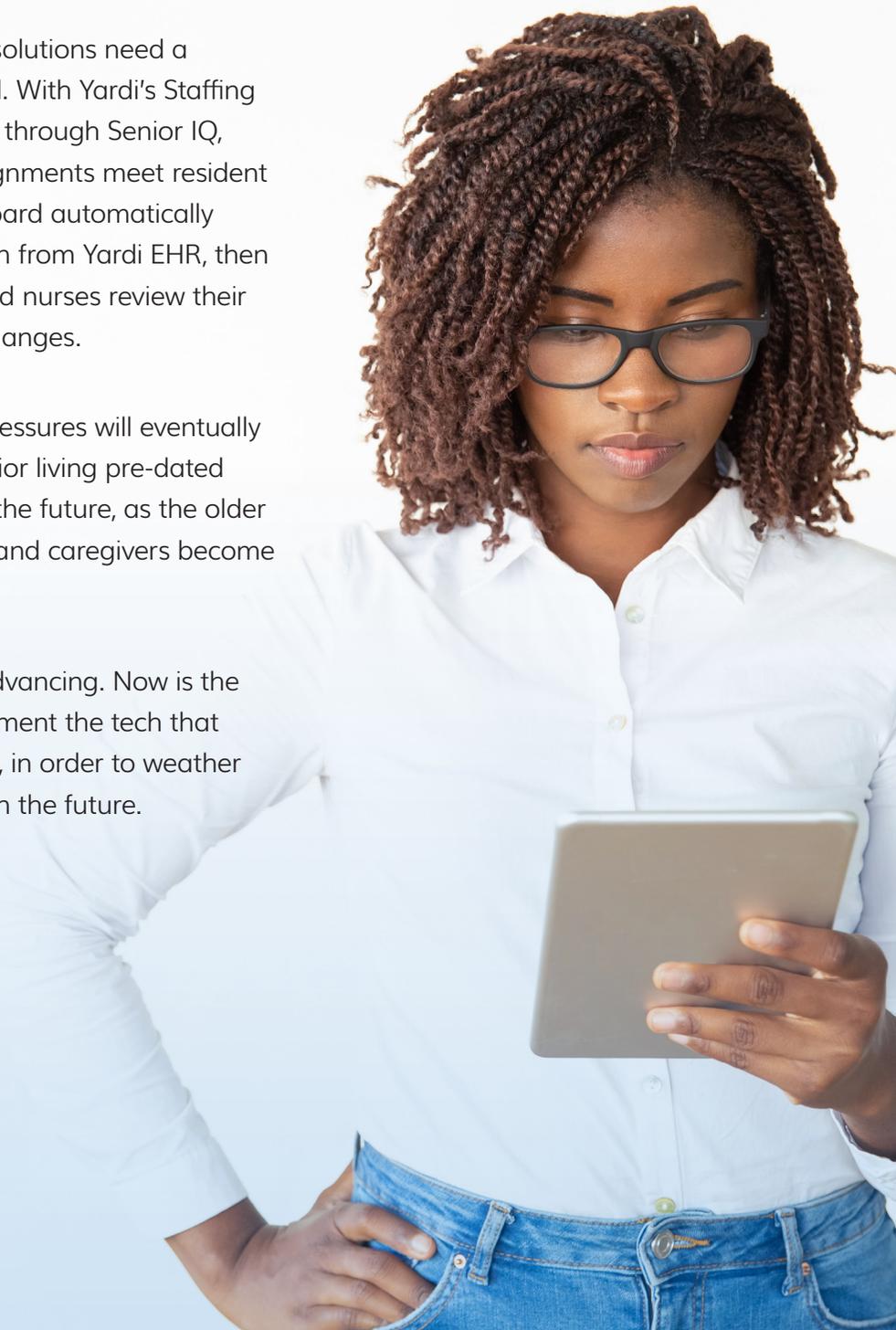
MAKING LIFE EASIER FOR SENIOR LIVING STAFF

The statistics are sobering: 77% of recently surveyed assisted living providers say that their staffing situation has gotten "worse" or "much worse" since June 2021.^[1]

To help ease the burden, tech solutions need a streamlined staff efficiency tool. With Yardi's Staffing Analysis dashboard, accessible through Senior IQ, providers can ensure shift assignments meet resident care requirements. The dashboard automatically draws resident care information from Yardi EHR, then lets executive directors and lead nurses review their scheduling needs and make changes.

Pandemic-related workforce pressures will eventually ease, but the labor crisis in senior living pre-dated COVID-19 and will extend into the future, as the older adult population grows larger and caregivers become scarcer.

Luckily, technology is rapidly advancing. Now is the moment for providers to implement the tech that can help ease staffing burdens, in order to weather present challenges and thrive in the future.



To learn more about Yardi and the
Senior Living Suite, contact us at:

<https://www.yardi.com/about-us/request-information/>



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