



Future Trends in Senior Living: What can you do now to prepare?

It's no secret that senior living care facilities and models of care are changing. Gone is the perception of senior living care facilities as places of loneliness, limitation and illness. Providers are shifting their culture to resident-centered care models.



FUTURE TRENDS IN SENIOR LIVING

As providers shift their model of care, it is vital that the operational impact of this paradigm shift is fully understood throughout the entire organization, so the built environment can be designed to enhance and complement this model. Here, we explore some future trends in senior living care and what you can do now to prepare for them.

Update Your Strategic and Master Plan

In today's senior living care market, the "keeping up with the Jones" mentality is more applicable than ever before. It's critical that you know your competition. To remain competitive, we recommend updating your strategic plan, including your mission, vision, and values, every three years and updating your master plan and market research data every seven years. This practice will allow you to continually adjust the repositioning of your campus. Repositioning care options to reflect market needs involves extensively researching possibilities for better evidence-based design results within your facility. Examples include: adjusting the skilled nursing facility (SNF) population and adding and/or enhancing all levels of care beyond assisted living and independent living to adult day care, respite care, and wellness. Researching design solutions employed by providers, both nationally and internationally, may also prove useful.

Change Your Culture

Many providers have begun this process, but it is far from easy. Consider following these five steps:

1. Be strong and courageous. This process is not for the faint of heart. Your staff knows how to deliver good care; they've been taught how to do so for their entire careers. It will require strong leadership throughout. Make sure you have a strong team prior to beginning the process.
2. Develop a baseline of where your organization stands. Are you growing? Is everything status quo? Or are you declining?
3. Build a fantastic culture. Develop an internal survey to measure whether your staff would rank the organization as flourishing, healthy or toxic. You may be surprised by the results. The culture of any organization is a reflection

of its leaders. Are your staff members culture builders or culture busters?

4. Establish values by anchoring principles established in your vision to the values. Make it clear to your staff why your organization is making this change.
5. Finish strong. Failure is not an option.

CCRC Campuses on Remote Sites

Moving a continuing care retirement campus (CCRC) to a satellite site increases reach and casts a larger net of coverage, possibly leading to an increase in resident population and brand awareness. Explore nearby communities for need and substantiate the need through market study.

Wellness

As the baby boomers age, they will require programming and facilities to exceed in meeting the needs of all seven aspects of wellness, including emotional, intellectual, physical, environmental, social, occupational, and spiritual. If your programming and facilities meet these demands, you will have success!



Cohousing

Currently considered a niche market, cohousing is a form of collaborative housing, where residents actively participate in the design and operation of their neighborhood. This type of housing will increase due to affordability. Cohousing promotes both social contact and individual space. Although not technically considered a senior living care facility,

certain “neighborhood” design practices and ideas can be implemented to shift your focus to resident-directed care. Examples include: promoting resident individuality while developing a sense of community, adding outdoor common spaces (i.e. patios, courtyards, etc.), and establishing a designated social hub/community room.

Small House Design

Small house design skilled nursing (10 bed residences) eliminates the institutional-like feel often associated with senior living care facility design and fosters a more home-like setting, reminiscent of homes residents once lived in. Whether you believe in small house design or not, projects have crept into the Northern climates, and you will likely be competing against this in the future.



Community Partnerships

Look to partners that will improve your brand. Partnering with organizations in your community brings together concerned individuals and groups working toward improved quality of care in senior living care facilities. We recommend developing partnerships with key community organizations (i.e. hospitals/

clinics, schools, health clubs, restaurants, hospice providers, etc.) to increase awareness of your facility. Dedicate spaces to support these relationships and establish proactive measures that allow people to reside in their homes longer, such as in-home nursing, resources for insurance and medical assistance, and transportation services.

Sustainable Design Practices

Environmental sustainability has not typically been associated with senior living care facility design, but an increasing amount of providers are incorporating practical “green” practices to develop energy efficient communities that are sustainable in ways that contribute meaningfully to the lives of their residents. Implementing practical sustainable programs, such as establishing a resident-directed recycling program or planting a vegetable garden, cut food costs and encourage residents to engage in participatory activities. When renovating or building new, work with statewide programs to implement cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects and systems. By doing this, you will reduce your fixed energy costs while adding a market edge to your campus.

Working with the AHJ

From residential care administrators and gerontology experts to design professionals and facility managers, all stakeholders are now encouraged to review senior living care design and regulatory guidelines and submit comments/suggestions for revision. The 2012 edition of *Life Safety Code* is the most widely-used source for occupant safety strategies throughout the life cycle of a building, so be familiar with these codes and work closely with your AHJ (authority having jurisdiction) to recommend incentive plans for better care and senior living care built environments. A collaborative and participatory approach with your AHJ is mutually beneficial.



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