



CASE STUDY

WRITTEN BY:

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ORGANIZATION:

Benchmark Senior Living

CORPORATE

HEADQUARTERS:

Wellesley, MA

CORPORATE OVERVIEW:

51 senior living facilities, including independent living, traditional assisted living, and memory, Alzheimer's and dementia care.

SITUATION/ANALYSIS:

No standardized resident continence care program, including tailoring supplies to each resident's needs. Issues included:

- » Using incorrect supplies
- » Running out of supplies
- » Facility providing supplies with no way to capture costs and bill residents

SOLUTION:

Partnered with Medline to provide customized "Continence Care Bundles" directly to each resident. Benefits include:

- » Improved care
- » Ample supply of products
- » Convenience
- » Cost savings to residents
- » Increased revenue to facilities

Continence Care Bundles Enhance Resident Care, Service and Satisfaction

Resident-specific supplies delivered direct help improve continence care

Our Organization

Benchmark Senior Living provides residents of the New England area with a variety of senior living options, including Independent Living, Traditional Assisted Living, Assisted Living for the Memory Impaired (including Alzheimer's and Dementia Care), and Respite Stay programs.

Our more than 50 locations span Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and Pennsylvania — featuring residences in the greater Boston, Hartford, New Haven, Providence, Philadelphia and Cape Cod regions. We cater to our residents' lifestyles and we are proud to offer a world of opportunities where residents will learn something new, share wonderful experiences with friends, and take part in the activities they enjoy most, every day.

Our Quality Resident Services program rigorously assesses senior living standards in each of our communities on a regular basis. In addition, a licensed nursing professional oversees care in every Benchmark community that offers assisted living or nursing care. We support our promise of consistent excellence in quality and safety through a holistic approach that looks at management, staffing, and thorough communication.

Assisted Living

Benchmark Senior Living's assisted living lifestyle offers a personalized balance of assistance and independence. Residents enjoy the privacy of their own apartment and the support of our caring staff for anything they may need - from personal care and transportation, to medication and continence management, or even just a friend to check in and talk.

We offer different assisted living service plans, ensuring residents receive the care they need to fit their lifestyle.

Assisted Living Services Available

- » Assistance with daily tasks
- » 24-hour care staff
- » Medication management
- » Continence management
- » Restaurant-style dining
- » Weekly apartment cleaning and linen services
- » Local transportation services
- » Full calendar of activities

Our Challenge

Over the last several years, the average age of our residents has increased and their health needs have become more acute. This includes up to 30-40 percent of our residents experiencing some level of incontinence, including assistance with toileting. Although continence care is an essential service provided by our nurses and aides, in the past we generally left the responsibility of providing the different supplies to the residents or their family members.

As the need for continence care grew larger, we were receiving consistent and growing feedback from our front-line nursing staff about the pressing need for an organized and reliable way to provide continence supplies to our residents.

This process had several drawbacks, including: purchasing incorrect incontinence products for the resident's individualized needs, forgetting to purchase supplies, and running out of supplies. It was not unusual for a resident who ran out of supplies to borrow from a neighbor, or the facility might have some products on hand to help out. In either case, the product was probably not totally designed for the resident's needs.

With residents responsible for their own supplies, not only would they run out of certain items, they often didn't provide supplies for the caregivers like creams, exam gloves and wipes, which made providing quality care more challenging.

Additionally, when facilities purchased supplies to keep on hand in case of emergencies, there was no mechanism to track these expenses and bill them back to the residents. As a result, the supplies were considered an operational expense rather than a revenue generator. There was also no specific space or organized area set aside to store the extra supplies. Instead, they were kept in an office, closet or any available empty space.

The Solution

As the need for continence care grew larger, we were receiving consistent and growing feedback from our front line nursing staff about the pressing need for an organized and reliable way to provide continence supplies to our residents. Early in 2012, we approached our supply partner, Medline, about working with us to develop a program to provide continence supplies to our residents in all of our facilities.

Our priority was to focus on program logistics rather than seeing this as an additional revenue stream because we knew we had a real problem to solve and an opportunity to improve resident care. If we implemented the program correctly, the residents would receive quality continence

supplies conveniently and at a cost saving, which would increase resident satisfaction. At the same time, we could reduce our operating expenses by eliminating the need to maintain an inventory of continence supplies. As icing on the cake, if this helped add to our revenues while still saving our residents on the cost of their supplies, this is a win-win program for everyone.

Continence Care Bundles

The program we developed with Medline was a resident-specific Continence Care Bundle that contained specific supplies tailored for each resident. The bundle would be delivered to our facility labeled with the resident's name so that we could deliver it directly to the resident. The bundle would include disposable liners, pads, protective underwear or briefs, as well as exam gloves for caregivers and cleansing wipes and protective skin cream.

We came up with four different bundles based on the resident's continence assessment: light, moderate, heavy and heavy plus.

They (residents and family members) like the convenience of the bundles. They no longer have to worry about running out of supplies and remembering to buy them and guessing which ones are the right products.

Each bundle contains a 30-day supply of items unless the need for additional supplies was identified. What is great about working with Medline is that as a market leader, Medline provides a wide-range of high quality supplies, as well as clinical and product expertise. Equally important, Medline has the distribution and logistical capabilities to confidently service all of our 50-plus facilities throughout the New England region.



Benchmark Senior Living has more than 50 locations spanning the New England region offering a variety of services, including continence management.



FITRIGHT® PRODUCT SELECTION



Select the appropriate product based on the individual's mobility and urinary output.

Select the correct symbol based on the following:

Resident's condition	Product	Symbol
Stress incontinence	Pads	Seahorse
Ambulatory or combative (Alzheimer's)	Protective Underwear	Frog
Ambulatory, weightbearing (1-person assist)	Liners	Turtle
Bedridden, contracted or combative	Briefs	Fish
Bedridden, chronic diarrhea or agitated at night	Overnight Brief	Dolphin



*Open-airing, low-air-loss system: Seal

To help our front-line staff select the correct products and sizes, Medline created the FitRight® Product Selection tool. Determined by the resident's height, weight and physical condition, our nursing staff uses the tool to select the correct size and style of briefs and other protective wear.

For our nurses and aides, they know that when they make a resident visit, their supplies, such as gloves and protective creams, will be waiting for them so they can provide quality care without delay

Contenance Management Assessment

We started by training our department heads, including resident care directors and traditional care directors. They are the supervisors of our assisted living facilities and oversee the front-line nursing and aide staff. They are also the people responsible for placing the orders for the bundles.

As part of our standard evaluation for each new resident, our nurses perform an assessment to determine the level of continence care and explain the Contenance Care Program. The nurses ask the residents and/or

family members a series of questions to help determine the appropriate bundle, including assessing the residents' mobility and urine output. The residents are also measured and weighed to ensure they receive correct-fitting protective products, so they perform as designed and are comfortable to wear.

Medline sales representatives and product specialists are assigned different areas within the New England region to help educate each facility on the products, the assessment process and the ordering method.

A simple standard order form was developed for each facility to submit their monthly orders online. The resident's name is included with each order along with the bundle type. The order is delivered directly to the facility, individually and discretely wrapped with the resident's name, so the nurse just has to drop the package off with each resident.

Convenience and Cost Savings

The program typically saves residents between five and 10 percent on supplies they would normally purchase at a local pharmacy or "big box" retail store. But what we mostly hear from residents and family members is

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that they really like the convenience. They no longer have to worry about running out of supplies and remembering to buy them or guessing which ones are the right products. Nor do they have to be embarrassed about the stigma of purchasing continence supplies in a public store. With the bundles, now they have the confidence that the correct supplies are being delivered directly to their rooms. For our nurses and aides, they know that when they make a resident visit, their supplies, such as gloves and protective creams,

will be waiting for them so they can provide quality care without delay.

The financial benefits for each facility include decreasing operating expenses by eliminating emergency stock of supplies and increasing ancillary revenue from each bundle order. Currently about one quarter of our residents who experience some form of incontinence are utilizing the program, so there is considerable opportunity for growing the service.

To expand the program, we are continually educating leadership at each of our facilities to encourage participation among residents who could benefit from utilizing the service. Similar to levels of care or medication management, the Continence Care Program has become a staple of the services we offer our residents that helps set us apart from our competition and enhance our quality of care.

About the Authors

Elizabeth Bryant is the Regional Director of Operations and Special Projects for Benchmark Senior Living. In her position, Elizabeth is responsible for overseeing and delivering special projects for the operating team, including managing the operational transition of new acquisitions and new developments, as well as playing an active role in key strategic initiatives for the operations and resident care teams. She has been with Benchmark Senior Living since August 2005.

Allison Guthertz is Vice President of Quality Resident Services. She is responsible for improving customer and associate engagement by designing and updating programs; supporting implementation and operations; assessing quality and brand opportunity and reporting opportunity and success. She has been at Benchmark Senior Living since July 2009.



Continence Care Bundles are tailored to each resident's needs and include a mixture of the following products (examples pictured here): disposable liners, pads, protective underwear or briefs, exam gloves for caregivers, cleansing wipes and protective skin cream.



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