



INSIDE THE BIG BUSINESS OF ANCILLARY SERVICES IN SENIOR LIVING



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	About Senior Housing News
4	Inside the Big Business of Ancillary Services in Senior Living
5	Defining Ancillary Services
8	To Build or to Partner? Strategies to Implement Ancillary Services in Senior Living
13	How Residents Will Pay for Ancillary Services
15	Why Senior Living Needs Ancillary Services
	20 Length of Stay Logic
21	Designing for Ancillary Services
	24 Centers for Healthy Living (CHLs) of the Future
25	The Future of Ancillary Services
26	Key Takeaways



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Senior living residents are increasingly looking for the total package when they choose where to live, meaning they want as much access to different kinds of amenities and services as possible, as conveniently as possible.

In recent years, that has meant constructing senior living communities with several onsite dining options so residents have the freedom of choice and providing multiple activity areas to accommodate a variety of programming. But as resident acuity rises and providers struggle with maintaining consistent occupancy levels, it's becoming clear that residents want—and need—additional amenities and clinical services within arm's reach.

That's where ancillary services in seniors housing come into play. The term refers to services outside of those standardly provided by a community, such as dining, activities and more.

More and more, operators are turning to health care and wellness-focused add-ons in addition to monthly rent to provide for their residents to the fullest, drive new business and extend stays at their communities. This has involved bringing doctors to communities for at-home appointments, hosting various therapies directly on site and even creating spaces specifically to house diverse ancillary initiatives.

"We're on the cusp of a lot of change, so everybody's looking at [ancillary services] to determine what mix will help serve people best," says Steve Lindsey, CEO of Garden Spot Village, a nonprofit continuing care retirement community (CCRC) located in New Holland, Pennsylvania.

Indeed, serving residents as completely as possible is the main objective for senior living providers, which is why they need to look beyond their typical offerings to new and innovative approaches for care. If not, they risk losing their residents to different settings or communities—and the opportunity to bolster occupancy.

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– **Steve Lindsey**

CEO of Garden Spot Village



DEFINING ANCILLARY SERVICES

Ancillary services in senior living are widespread, and they're continuously gaining traction in the sector as providers look to diversify what they offer to current and prospective residents alike.

Different senior living providers hold different definitions of ancillary services. In general, the term refers to additional business lines or service offerings that support a company's main purpose. In senior living, that means services that supplement a senior's basic care needs.

For some operators, ancillary services are as simple as offering laundry or parking for residents at an extra cost beyond what they pay per month for things like dining, activities and general care. However, the term today largely hones in on health care and wellness, ranging from massage therapy and salon services to primary care physicians paying visits to communities.

From a clinical perspective, ancillary services don't encompass primary care, but rather denote the services that branch off of and support primary care, says Dr. Steven Fuller, vice president and corporate medical director of Dillsburg, Pennsylvania-based Presbyterian Senior Living, a not-for-profit provider of retirement and senior care services.

"When it comes to delivery of health care in this country, especially for the elderly, attention needs to shift from episodic clinical intervention to daily wellness and a focus on adherence to advised medical therapies," according to a 2014 American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA) report titled "Post-Acute Enters a New Era."

The top three ancillary services in senior living typically include home health care, rehabilitation and hospice care, says Maribeth Bersani, COO and senior vice president of public policy for industry association Argentum. Yet providers are taking their services past what might be considered the norm to go above and beyond for their residents.



Salon and spa at Solana Preserve Vintage Park in Houston, TX

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LOWRY, COURTESY OF STUDIOSIX5

