



 **SENIOR HOUSING NEWS**

The Primary Care Opportunity In Senior Living

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About Senior Housing News

Senior Housing News (SHN) is the leading source of news and information covering the senior housing industry.

With a national reach of more than 30,000 professionals, SHN boasts a readership that includes senior housing operators,

developers, banking institutions, real estate investment trusts, private equity and service providers catering to the industry. SHN provides a cutting-edge and targeted platform unlike any other publication, giving you the opportunity to reach decision-makers every day

Introduction

Health care costs for seniors are soaring, health levels are plateauing and experts across the care continuum are searching for fixes to both. The answer could be found by going back to the basics in medical care. And senior housing might hold the key.

The “basics” in question is primary care. Along with the actual medical care provided, a primary care visit creates the foundation for a senior’s good health by building a relationship between the patient and the primary care provider, thus preemptively addressing health events that can send a senior out of their home and into a hospital.

With the continued growth in value-based care, largely through the implementation of Medicare Advantage plans, everyone involved in the care journey for seniors is getting preemptive. The result is a renewed focus on primary care, with senior housing as a powerful hub. As 2019 takes shape, the collective realization among senior housing providers, insurers, health systems, seniors and their families of the role senior living can play in delivering this care will dramatically shift the power structure in the care continuum.

“If the senior housing industry can bring primary care onsite on a large scale in the next few years, it can become the predominant pre-acute provider of care in the health care continuum,” says Andrew Carle, president of Carle Consulting LLC. “And being the predominant pre-acute provider of care can make you more powerful than the hospitals or the nursing homes or anyone else in the system.”

Key Takeaways:

- Senior living operators can take a power position in the care continuum by bringing primary care onsite
- Health outcomes for seniors improve when time with primary care physicians increases
- Because operators can manage a senior population, they can be ideal partners for Medicare Advantage plan owners
- Rather than make money for someone else, innovative senior living operators are creating new revenue streams by owning Medicare Advantage plans
- Major new players like Humana and Walgreens are taking ownership of primary care delivery to seniors

How senior living can become the power player of primary care

Seniors are going to receive primary care. The question is where.

Primary care is critical for any person’s health, yet across the nation, visits to those physicians are declining. A 2018 report by the Health Care Cost Institute found an 18% decrease in office visits to primary care physicians between 2012 and 2016, and a corresponding 14% increase in visits to all other health providers, namely specialists and the ER.

When it comes to seniors specifically, they face two large burdens to accessing primary care that younger people do not. The first is the difficulty of travel. The second is the increased need for primary care overnight outside of office hours, due to the risk of falls.

They also face a greater need for primary care than do younger generations. The reason is their chronic health conditions. These conditions grow in number as people age and grow in complexity as people contract more. They also raise the cost of health care spending, and are best managed via consistent visits with a primary care physician, who can help a senior manage them preemptively.

Add it all up and we see a landscape where bringing primary care directly to seniors in senior housing is more important than ever. In fact, two elements have the potential to turn senior living into the preeminent power player in primary care delivery. The first is Medicare Advantage. The second is consumer demand.

Three major factors driving primary care into senior living

