

AN E-BOOK BY



McKnight's
Senior Living



How real-time location services can benefit your senior living community

RTLS can help you address safety, security and staffing challenges

SPONSORED BY





HOW REAL-TIME LOCATION SERVICES CAN BENEFIT YOUR SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY



Photo: Klaus Veefelt/Getty Images

Real-time location services today represent a \$99 billion US industry — one that has grown exponentially in sophistication and acceptance as a vital set of eyes and ears that never grow tired, doing everything in senior living from quickly resolving elopement issues to dispatching help to injured residents on the other side of a community within moments.

Challenges of caring for members of the country's most vulnerable population have never been greater. Taking one's eye off the ball is not an option. RTLS can help answer numerous types of questions to ensure resident safety and security, according to Polina Braunstein, president and CEO of Quake Global, a communications technology company.



Technology can eliminate non-value-added tasks and enable staff to spend more time with the residents.

— POLINA BRAUNSTEIN, QUAKE GLOBAL PRESIDENT AND CEO

“Is a resident active and moving around, or should a staff member check on the resident? If the resident has a visitor or a package or needs medication, where are they located? Has a resident or staff member come into contact with someone they were not supposed to?” she posed. “Has a memory care resident wandered close to a possible building exit? Is a resident in an unauthorized location or an area where a staff member also should be, such as the restaurant kitchen?”

It's easy to see how staff can easily get overwhelmed. Isolation can affect residents profoundly. “Technology



can eliminate non-value-added tasks and enable staff to spend more time with the residents,” Braunstein added.

BENEFITS OF RTLS

By knowing residents' whereabouts at all times, staff members can minimize response times, optimize workflow and enhance the overall resident experience, Braunstein said.

Although their core role is to alert community staff members to active emergency events, most RTLS capabilities also enable efficient care coordination, a feature that is becoming increasingly vital in light of industry workforce challenges.

Connecting RTLS systems with other market standard wireless technologies, such as Bluetooth, opens an even larger world of situational awareness.

“Many systems have an ability to pair with existing in-house systems specific to physical activity, medication management — even hospital databases — providing any facility or groups of facilities with a 360-degree view of their operation,” she added.

THE TRUE VALUE OF RTLS

“Day-to-day operations in a senior living community often can be hectic and hard to plan,” Braunstein said. “The ability to provide a digital communication platform — especially voice communication — is critically important.”

Rapid response features in an RTLS system, such as contact tracing and alerts, allow staff members to be dispatched or emergency help summoned quickly, at the push of a button.

“With room-level visibility and beaconing features, users can really get a breadcrumb trail every few seconds,” said Kevin Harris, product manager for Quake Global. Such features can go a long way in improving resident



HOW REAL-TIME LOCATION SERVICES CAN BENEFIT YOUR SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

satisfaction while mitigating the sense of isolation many residents can sometimes feel.

Most systems also allow resident smart devices and wearables to easily synch, increasing the overall level of connectivity. Moreover, RTLS offers a quantum-leap advantage over standard emergency call systems, which typically are operated manually and are bereft of important capabilities such as data collection, reporting and analytics, which empower operators to improve their processes, Braunstein added.

"Real-time location systems really provide a ton of data that you can access to help improve your overall business," Harris added. Those include manpower planning, automating numerous administrative tasks and developing key performance indicators.

The experts strongly advise weighing options between part-time and full-time RTLS. "Part-time location systems will include a location when an alert is delivered, but they do not provide a consistent and constant location for resident movements," noted Luke Waidmann, director of solution design for Quake Global.

Such systems, he added, "usually will have a beacon rate that is measured in minutes or hours. As a result, a resident moving and not generating an alert can go anywhere in the whole facility without any new information, or intelligence, being added in between beacon messages."

In contrast, wearables paired with a full-time RTLS can broadcast on high frequency every few seconds, and this helps to enable real system intelligence contact tracing, according to Waidmann. "So it's really critical to ask the right questions and find solutions that provide real-time location," Waidmann added.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Waidmann shared the following tips regarding full-time RTLS implementation:

Real-time location systems really provide a ton of data that you can access to help improve your overall business.

– KEVIN HARRIS, QUAKE GLOBAL PRODUCT MANAGER



- The system should be customizable, a critical choice considering the subtle nuances among various levels of care.
- Promote your RTLS system with staff members, especially new staff members soon after onboarding. "These systems can help to retain your team members," Waidmann said. "Staff retention is a huge problem, so we want to be able to recognize who our strongest performers are to make sure to keep them around."
- Ensure that you maximize as many data aggregation features as possible. Doing so will yield significant benefits when it comes to generating compliance reports, on-demand real-time data points and key performance indicators.
- Choose an uninterrupted solution with 24-hour support. "Relieving staff from certain administrative burdens allows your workforce to provide better care to residents," Waidmann added.
- Capitalize on every enhanced reporting and alerting feature, something that's known as "locationing."
- Incorporate wearables and other smart devices wherever possible, Waidmann added. Doing so literally creates the shortest distance between an ailing resident and immediate assistance.

Paired with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, those low-profile wristband or pendant devices allow residents to summon help by a simple button push. They can be programmed to send dashboard alerts when a resident is approaching an exit or when a door or window is opened. Advanced options also can help residents obtain need-



Photo: Solisim/Getty Images

Real-time location systems can help answer numerous types of questions to ensure resident safety and security.



HOW REAL-TIME LOCATION SERVICES CAN BENEFIT YOUR SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY



Photo: Oliver Rossi/Getty Images

Wristband or pendant devices allow residents to summon help with the press of a button.

ed medication and helpful reminders to eat and exercise, as well as customizable features for residents who have memory care or mental health needs.

TYPICAL CONFIGURATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Ensure that your solution can locate staff members and residents in real time and with room-level accuracy, Waidmann advised. Integrate all internet of things devices in your community to create a more seamless solution, he added, and pay special attention to features such as alert escalations, which ensure your response is as fast as possible by marshaling the efforts of key staff members throughout your building.

Pair your technology with maps, Waidmann said, adding that maps for medication pass technologies or implementations are especially useful.

He also recommended incorporating environmental safety devices – such as temperature, water, mattress and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors – as well as pull cords, motion/activity sensors and cameras, into your overall security plans.

And consider adding kiosks for both the administrators and front desk concierge for overall community awareness and to help visitors, clinicians and contractors check in and out, Waidmann said. A simple app update to staff member cell phones can allow them to receive, ac-

cess, assign and clear alerts, access community maps and enable two-way talk capability, he said.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

When installing and implementing your RTLS system, consider point-of-sale integrations and wearables within your RTLS, so residents don't have to carry around keycards or credit cards or any other payment form as a key fob for their own room or apartment, the experts advised. The same advice applies to key fobs, to save residents from carrying keys.

Also consider a system that integrates with other applications and systems such as property management, they said.

"Your solution also should have the ability to provide reports, analytics and integration capabilities," said David Mitchell, vice president of customer support for Quake Global. "The typical dashboard also should enable you to see your system, condition or health, critical resident information, and trends about your community and how well your staff is performing."

Typical reports may include alerts and status, contact tracing information, resident census data, staff metrics, event attendance, device supervision and daily room activity.

"The most important part of alerts, including mobile alerts, is they are instant and audible when triggered," Mitchell added. Most RTLS alerts, he said, are gener-



It's really critical to ask the right questions and find solutions that provide real-time location.

– LUKE WAIDMANN, QUAKE GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF SOLUTION DESIGN



ated by emergency calls from a wearable or a pre-programmed "hot zone" or chaperone zone entry, bathroom/bedroom pullcord and motion detectors. Mitchell also advised strongly vetting your RTLS provider's customer service track record.

"You want a service team that will be there from day one of the design of the solution through the life of your community, a service team that supports your caregivers and advances the technology as needed," he added. ■