

**SURVEY RESULTS**

# The State of Senior Living Medication Management

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# The State of Senior Living Medication Management

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Effective medication management in senior living is critical not only to the safety and well-being of residents, but to the performance of the community as a whole. In fact, respondents give significant weight to the impact of medication management on operational success, rating its importance a 4.8 out of 5, with 5 being the most important, according to The State of Senior Living Medication Management survey.

From June 25 to August 7, 2024, Senior Housing News conducted a survey in partnership with Guardian Pharmacy Services to learn how senior living providers are approaching medication management in today's challenging environment.

Senior Housing News and Guardian Pharmacy Services are pleased to share these survey results in hopes of providing insight into some of the key challenges influencing senior living medication management today, and how providers can overcome them.

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**Tim Regan**  
Editor, Senior Housing News

# Guardian's Perspective on the Senior Living Medication Management Landscape

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The senior living industry has undergone a transformation. Providers, once focused on serving active seniors, are now supporting a growing number of older, higher-acuity residents requiring more care and assistance with daily living. These residents on average take 12 to 14 medications daily, often prescribed by multiple physicians and dispensed by various pharmacies, creating challenges for staff and increasing the risk of medication errors.

Staffing shortages combined with the complexity of managing medications for residents, have left leaders concerned about the potential for errors. According to survey participants, few are confident medication management is error-free in their communities, with many expressing concerns about liability risks.

This is where partnering with a long-term care (LTC) pharmacy can make a difference. LTC pharmacies provide the latest technology, knowledge, and support communities need to reduce risks. By leveraging advanced technology and the expertise of an LTC pharmacy, providers can ensure safe medication management, lighten the burden on staff and enhance resident outcomes and well-being.

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**Kendall Forbes**

Executive Vice President of Sales & Operations, Guardian Pharmacy Services

# Executive Summary

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Seventy-five professionals contributed to the insights in this survey report, all of whom identify as working for organizations that provide senior living and long-term care services. Sixty-nine percent of these respondents serve as directors, VPs, C-suite executives, and owners, and they shared their perspectives on how companies of all sizes are:



Navigating medication management challenges in senior living



Mitigating risk and errors in their medication management processes



Leveraging partnerships to overcome these challenges and drive operational success

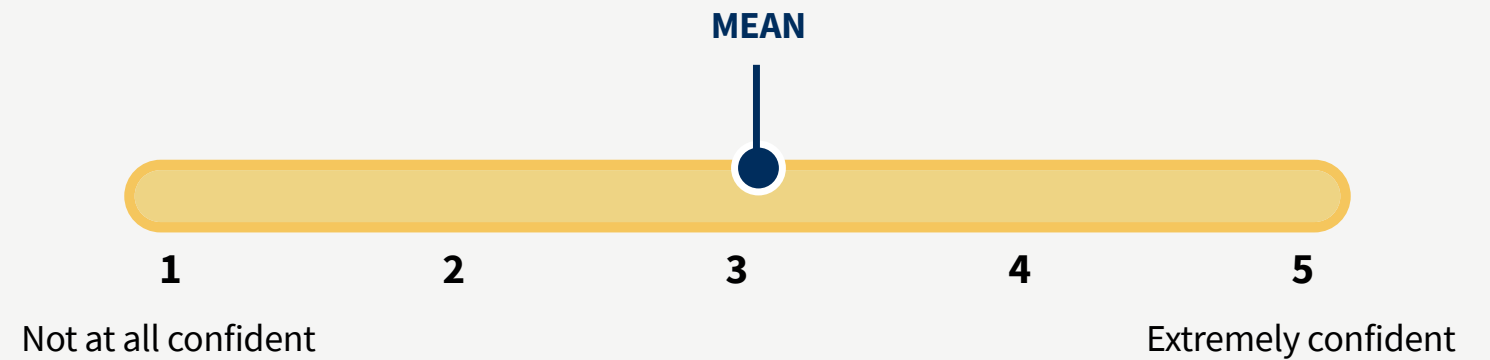
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## Key Takeaway #1

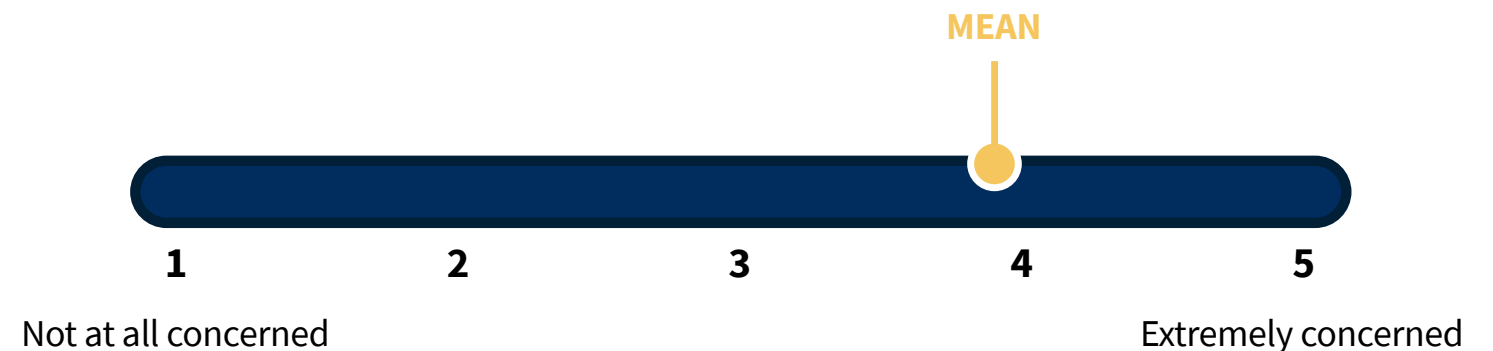
### Providers grapple with risk and errors in senior living medication management.

Survey participants are only moderately confident that medication management is error-free in their communities, raising significant concerns about liability risks from medication errors. These challenges are linked to the increased risk of errors when medications are provided by multiple pharmacies (95%), particularly if an eMAR is managed by one pharmacy while medications are dispensed by another (90%).

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most confident, how confident are you that medication management is error-free in your community?



On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most concerned, how concerned are you about liability risk from a medication error?

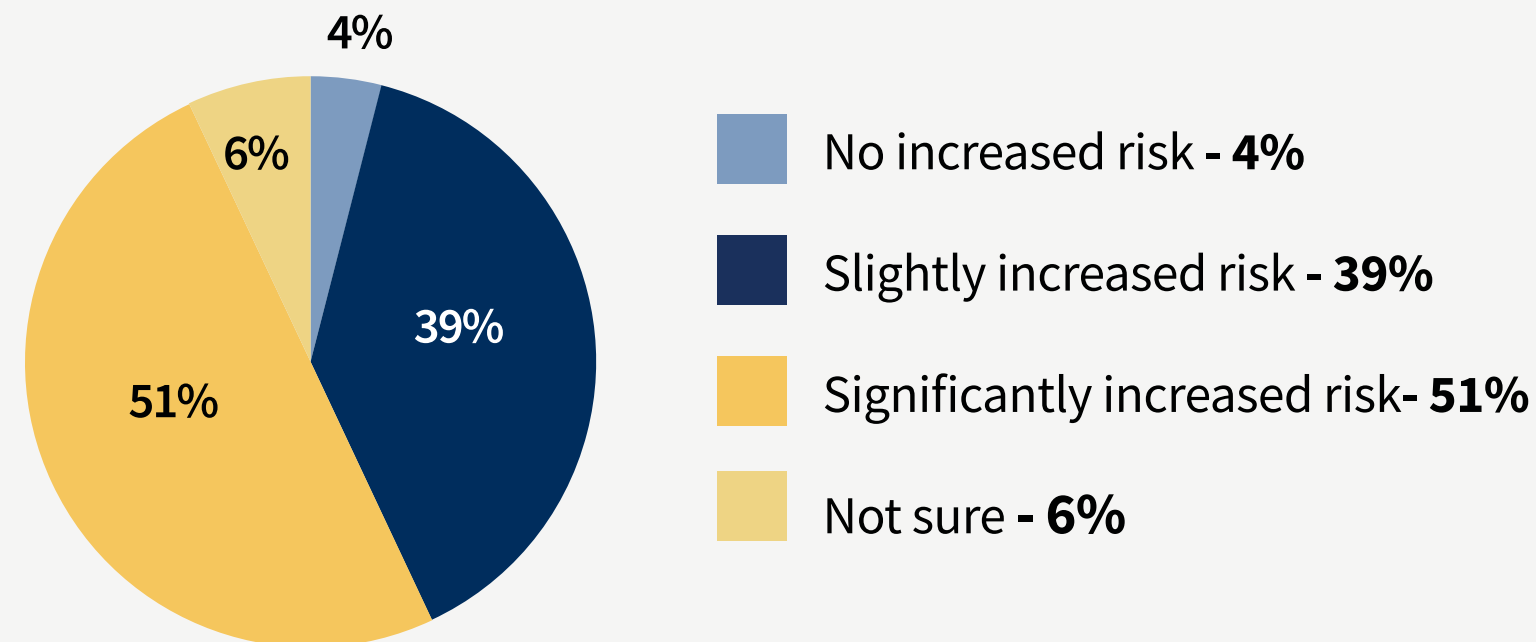




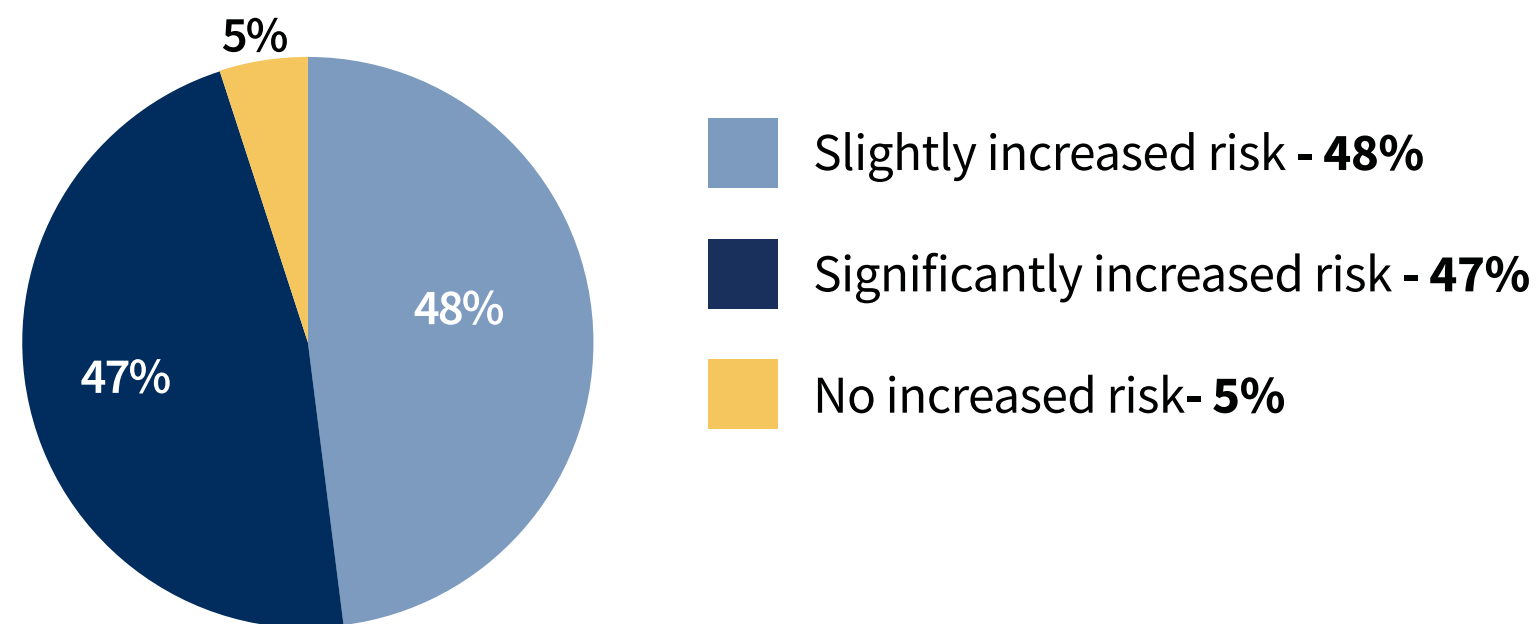
**“ As a senior living executive, I’ve seen firsthand how managing medications through multiple pharmacies can significantly increase the risk of errors. When different pharmacies handle medications, maintaining a complete view of a resident’s drug regimen becomes more difficult, increasing the likelihood of miscommunication, incorrect dosages, or even adverse drug interactions. Partnering with a single long-term care pharmacy streamlines this process, ensuring consistent packaging, clear communication, and seamless eMAR integration. This approach not only reduces medication errors but also lightens the load on staff, allowing them to focus on delivering quality care.”**

**Mary Sue Patchett**  
Senior Living Expert and Board Member, Guardian Pharmacy Services

**When the eMAR is managed by one pharmacy, but medications are dispensed from another, what is the impact on the risk for medication errors?**



**To what degree does having medications provided by multiple pharmacies affect the risk for medication errors?**



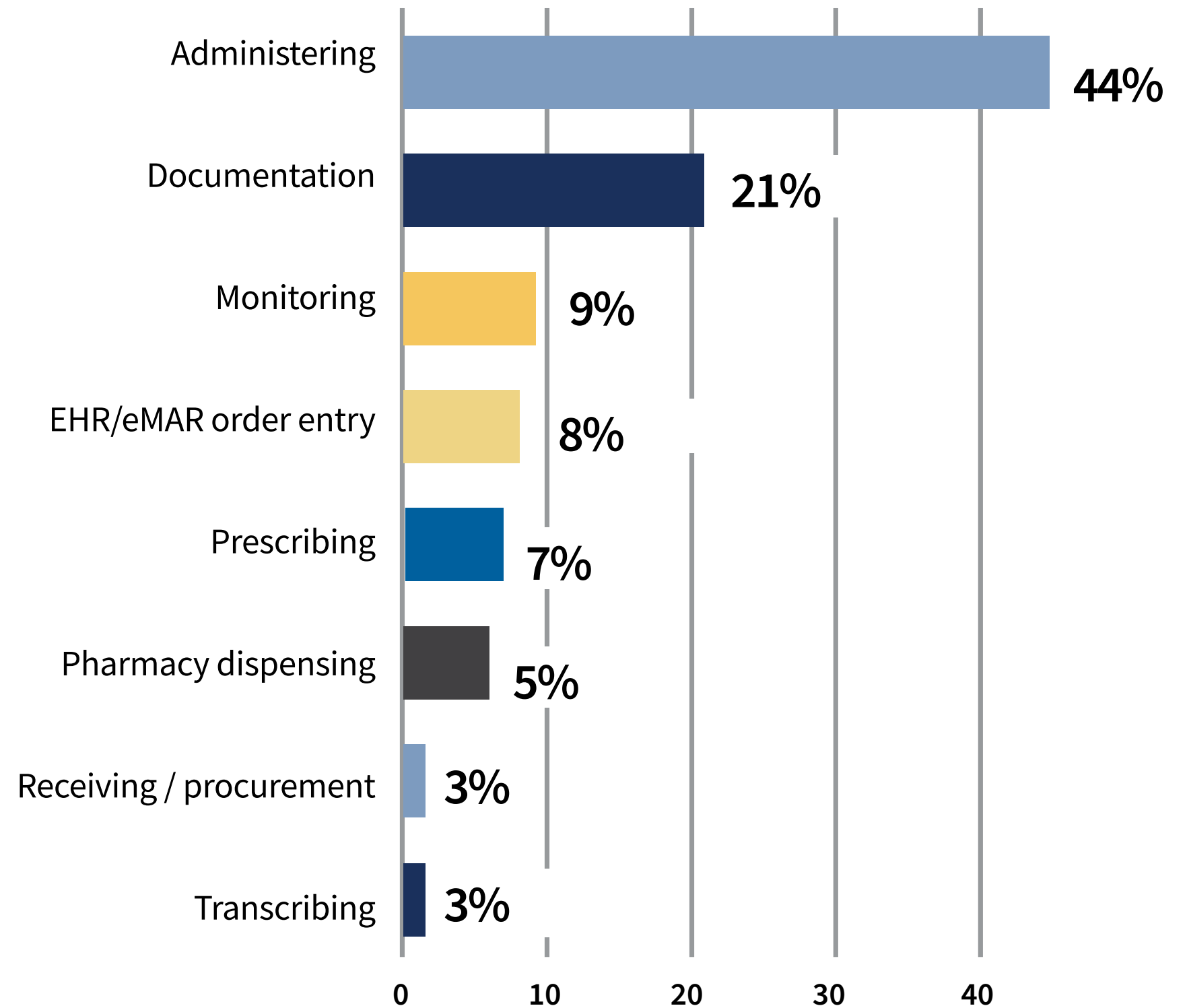
## Key Takeaway #2

**Medication management challenges are affecting the broader performance of senior living communities.**

Respondents give significant weight to the impact of medication management on operational success, rating its importance a 4.8 out of 5, with 5 being the most important.

Administering medications is the chief concern. There are also several subsidiary challenges like inconsistent packaging and labeling, and timely medication availability associated with families bringing outside medications into facilities.

**In the medication management workflow,**  
where is your organization's highest concern for errors?

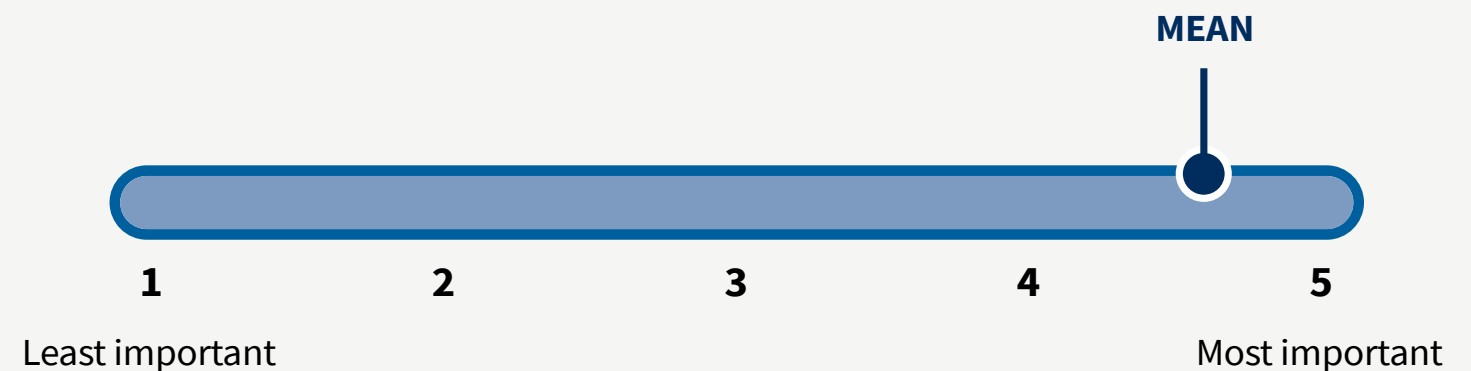




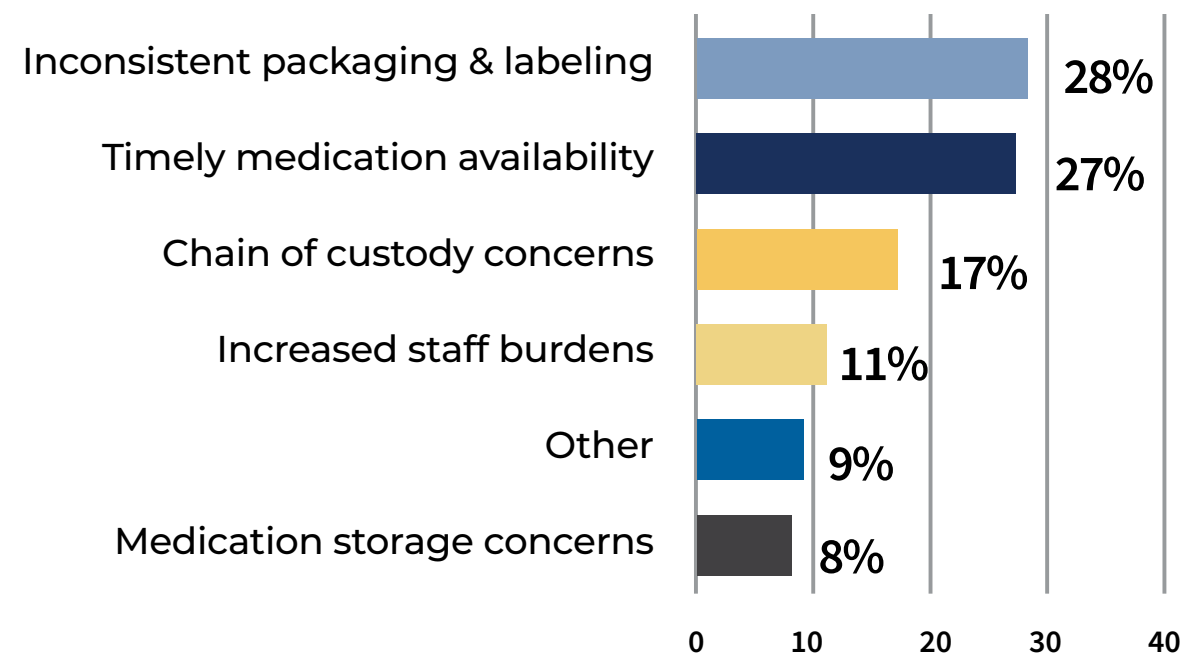
**“ In my decades of experience working alongside senior living providers, I’ve consistently heard from clients how partnering with a long-term care pharmacy for effective medication management has been vital for operational success. Providers frequently share that this collaboration reduces medication errors, saves valuable time and resources, and eases their nursing staff’s burden. Prioritizing safe medication management improves resident outcomes and enhances operational efficiencies, contributing to a community’s financial strength and overall success.”**

**Wendy Kallaher, RN**  
Senior Director, Account Management, Guardian Pharmacy Services

**On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, how important is safe medication management to operational success?**



**When families bring outside medications into the facility, what is the most significant risk?**



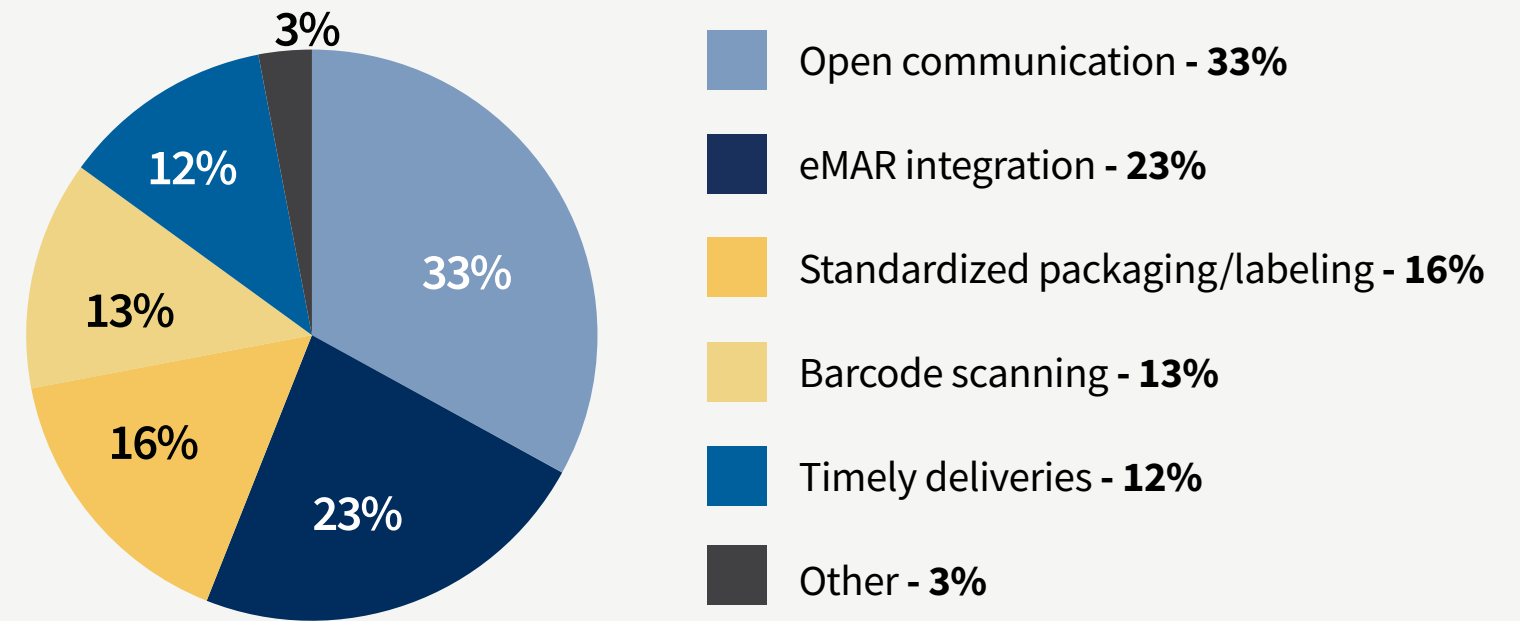


## Key Takeaway #3

**As senior living providers navigate the challenges of medication management, they are leaning into pharmacy partnerships to refine their approach.**

Forty-five percent of survey respondents believe safety with checks and balances is the most valuable result of adopting a pharmacy-driven eMAR. Additionally, 33% of respondents cited open communication as the key driver of risk reduction in community-pharmacy relationships at large.

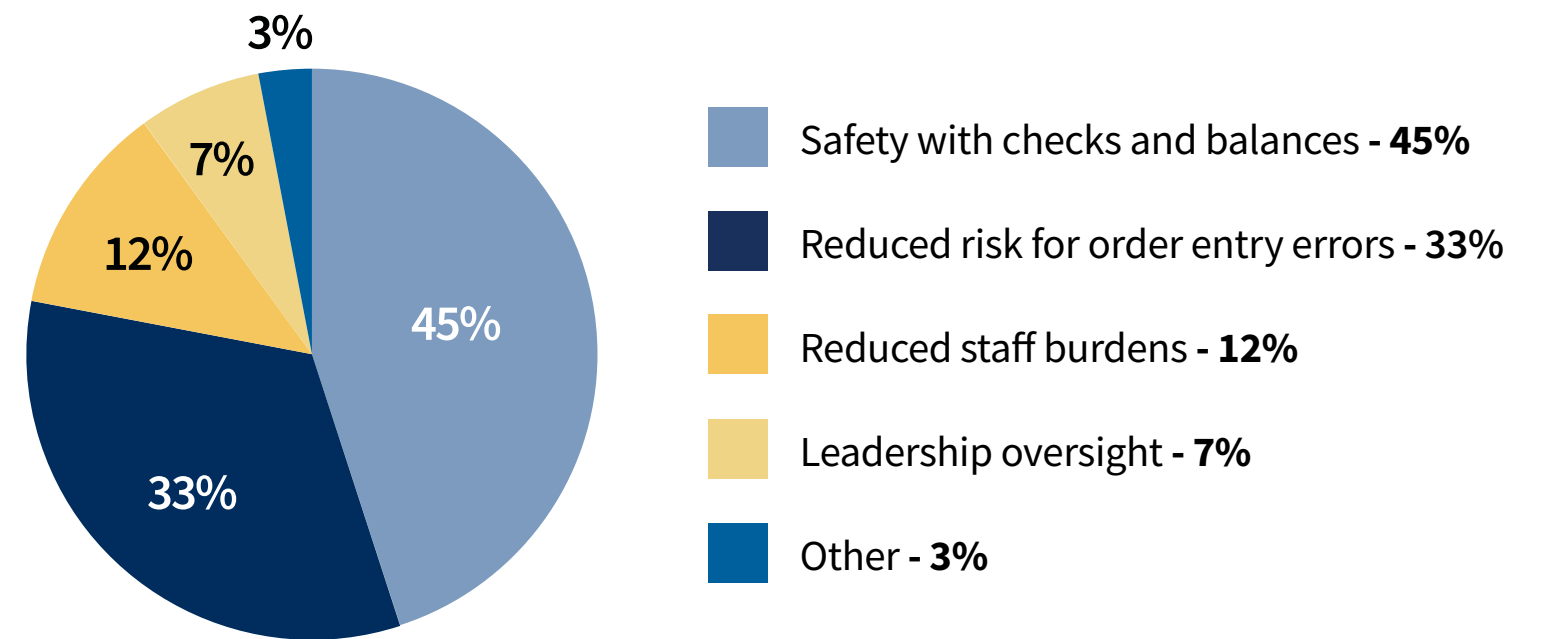
**What element of the community-pharmacy relationship most reduces the risk for medication errors?**



**“With the increasingly complex needs of our residents, strong partnerships with preferred national pharmacy providers have proven invaluable. Their expertise in integrating eMAR, combined with training sessions, medication cart audits, and the impactful clinical quality data and analytics some offer, ensures our staff can provide the highest standard of care. Clear communication and hands-on support from these providers help our team reduce errors and consistently deliver the care our residents deserve. Together, we’re enhancing the quality of life for our residents and advancing our mission to make a meaningful difference in their lives.”**

**Sharon Roth Maguire**  
Senior Vice President and Chief Health and Wellness Officer, LCS

**What is the most valuable result of adopting a pharmacy-driven eMAR, where pharmacy staff enters the medication orders?**



## ABOUT US

To learn more about Guardian Pharmacy Services, visit [guardianpharmacy.com](https://guardianpharmacy.com), or reach out to us at [answers@guardianpharmacy.com](mailto:answers@guardianpharmacy.com).

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