TECHNOLOGY THAT CONNECTS:

Strengthening Safety, Compliance,
and Staff Satisfaction in Senior Living

Guardian® Pharmacy Services

Overview

Senior living communities today face a complex set of clinical, operational, and regulatory demands, many tied directly to medication management. From preventing medication errors to reducing staff burden and improving communication, technology now plays a powerful role in helping operators elevate safety, maintain compliance, and support more efficient workflows.

In an environment with multiple prescribers, rising resident acuity, and frequent care transitions, even small communication gaps can have significant downstream effects. Coordination challenges, delays in information sharing, and inconsistent workflows can increase the risk of medication errors and place additional strain on staff.

69%

of senior living operators say technology has helped improve overall quality of care[1]

These challenges highlight a clear need for tools that strengthen communication and ensure information flows reliably across shifts and care settings. When systems are connected and up to date, operators can support safer medication practices and create more stable, predictable workflows for their teams.

Technology that connects teams and streamlines communication is no longer a 'nice to have.' It's **essential infrastructure for resident safety** and operational efficiency.

Technology's Role in Medication Safety

Medication-related issues remain a leading contributor to preventable harm in older adults. Nationally, medication errors account for more than 800,000 preventable injuries each year, and adverse drug events contribute to more than 700,000 emergency department (ED) visits according to the Institute of Medicine and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In senior living communities, residents often have multiple chronic conditions and complex medication regimens, creating a higher demand for clear communication and accurate information flow for care teams.

To reduce risk and enhance safety, integrated technologies such as EHR/eMAR and pharmacy system interoperability, secure pharmacy portals, HIPAA-compliant mobile messaging, barcode-enabled smart packaging, and digital resident enrollment forms are becoming standard components of a modern medication management strategy. These tools serve as a safety net by:

- **Supporting accurate data entry, dispensing, and billing.** Integrated systems help ensure orders are communicated clearly, then entered, dispensed, and billed accurately, reducing misunderstandings and downstream errors.

- **Creating a real-time connection between community staff and pharmacy teams.** When questions or discrepancies arise, care teams can quickly clarify orders, verify medication changes, and resolve issues before they escalate.

- **Documenting and tracking drug use trends and clinical interventions.** Data insights highlight patterns, reveal risks, and help leadership quantify improvements in safety and outcomes.

- **Ensuring complete and accurate resident profiles at move-in.** HIPAA-secure online resident enrollment guarantees the pharmacy receives critical information—such as allergies, insurance information, and responsible party contacts—at the time of admission. This reduces delays, prevents errors, and improves medication continuity from day one, all without relying on faxes or phone calls.

- **Providing an up-to-date view of each resident's medication regimen.** Better visibility across all orders and prescribers helps pharmacists identify potential medication-related issues early, including concerns such as drug interactions, omissions, and duplicate therapies.

These capabilities reduce variation, strengthen oversight, and help operators feel confident their communities are aligned with regulatory expectations.
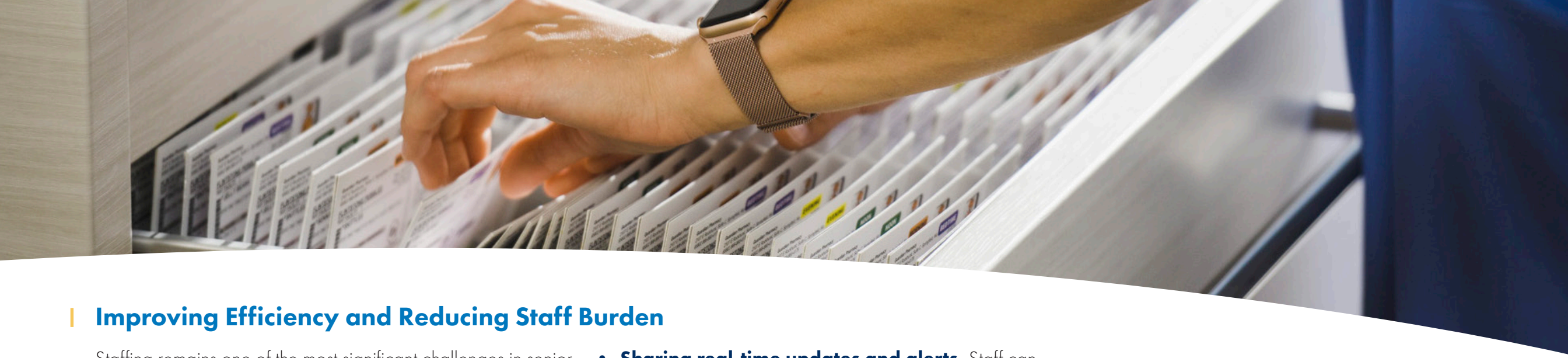
Improving Efficiency and Reducing Staff Burden

Staffing remains one of the most significant challenges in senior living. Care teams juggle demanding workloads, constant interruptions, and multiple communication channels.

Technology that improves information sharing and pharmacy communication can simplify daily workflows and enhance operational efficiency by:

- **Providing centralized oversight for leadership.** Dashboards and on-demand reports offer visibility into order status, refill needs, proof of delivery, and pharmacy correspondence.

- **Streamlining workflows for care teams.** Routine tasks such as requesting refills, tracking order progress, printing MARs or TARs, accessing drug information, or reviewing resident medication profiles can be completed quickly without phone calls or faxes.

- **Sharing real-time updates and alerts.** Staff can monitor medication changes, delivery timelines, or urgent messages from any device, decreasing delays and improving coordination.

- **Enabling secure, HIPAA-compliant communication.** Messaging tools allow community teams and pharmacy staff to communicate instantly, exchange updates, clarify orders, and collaborate effectively without faxing or lengthy callbacks.

Communities consistently report these tools streamline daily operations, making processes faster, more efficient, and predictable, improving overall productivity across shifts.

79%
of senior living operators say staffing shortages impact their ability to provide personalized care[1]

Integrated tools simplify daily tasks, cut down on phone calls and faxes, and **enhance the overall staff experience.**

Strengthening Regulatory Compliance

Medication management comes with significant regulatory expectations, especially related to administration, documentation, and oversight. Integrated technology supports compliance by:

- Enhancing accuracy and consistency across medication processes.
- Reducing risks associated with transcription and order-entry errors.
- Supporting audit readiness with documentation trails and proof of delivery.
- Providing real-time reporting and analytics for ongoing oversight.

Standardized, digital processes make it easier for leaders to monitor performance, identify gaps, and maintain strong documentation.

Driving Clinical and Financial Performance

Connected technology tools also support measurable improvements in both clinical and financial outcomes by:

- Improving medication adherence through fewer late or missed doses and better communication.
- Resolving issues proactively to prevent incidents that might otherwise lead to hospitalizations or ED visits.
- Strengthening coordination during care transitions to reduce medication errors.
- Ensuring more reliable delivery timelines and reduced workflow variability.

These improvements support healthier residents, fewer avoidable incidents, and more predictable operational costs.

A More Connected, Supported Care Team

When communication is streamlined and information is easy to access, team members feel more capable, supported, and less stressed. Connecting community staff directly with pharmacy teams has a meaningful impact on staff satisfaction for this very reason.

Many communities leverage solutions such as GuardianHub and GuardianNote to provide the framework for this connectivity, giving teams a centralized portal for a more simplified and efficient workflow and a HIPAA-secure platform for instant messaging.

Leaders appreciate the transparency and the reduction in follow-up needed to confirm order details or track down missing information. Staff often report that these integrated tools make it easier to stay organized and complete tasks without disruption.

In many communities, this type of technology brings welcome relief to heavy workloads. By simplifying communication, reducing manual steps, and improving access to information, teams can work more effectively, respond quickly to changes, and deliver care more confidently.

Interoperability **reduces friction across the medication management workflow** and strengthens the consistency and quality of resident care.

The Future of Senior Care is Connected

By embracing technology that improves visibility and information flow, including EHR-pharmacy system integrations, digital enrollment forms, secure pharmacy portals, and HIPAA-compliant messaging apps, operators can deliver consistent, high-quality care with greater confidence. When these tools work together, teams can prevent errors before they occur and maintain clear, consistent coordination across every shift. The result is a safer environment for residents and a more predictable workflow for community staff.

Ultimately, these systems strengthen day-to-day reliability and support a higher standard of care across the community.

[1] Cerulli, P. *The Role of Technology in Senior Living: New Report Highlights Evolving Trends and Key Takeaways.* I Advance Senior Care, May 25, 2023.

Guardian Pharmacy Services is one of the nation's largest and most innovative long-term care (LTC) pharmacy services companies. As medication management experts, we provide outstanding client service and resident care to LTC communities including assisted living, skilled nursing, behavioral health, and those that serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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