



BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF CHOICE FOR RESIDENTS AND STAFF

Americare is a Linked Senior client and has been a senior living provider throughout Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Illinois and Mississippi since 1981. They provide older adults and their families with independent living, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing and rehabilitation options. Many of the communities served are small and in rural areas of the United States. The Linked Senior team recently had the opportunity to speak with Steve Hatlestad, Senior Vice President of Operations for Americare's Skilled Nursing Division.

For the past 45 years, Steve has worked in the senior living industry. He is passionate about his work and loves his job. His interest in the aging field started after he earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland. He joined the Americare group 20 years ago and is a firm believer that, "Happy employees mean better care!" This was more true than ever when the global coronavirus pandemic began to engulf senior living communities in 2020. Steve worked closely with his Director of Nursing and Chief Financial Officer to make sure all staff members had the supplies and training they needed to remain safe and kept up daily briefings so the team was all on the same page.



This dedication to staff support and empowerment to ensure all residents have access to meaningful engagement and purpose is no surprise to those who know Steve. Since 2000, he has been working hard on implementing culture change to enhance the resident experience. A cornerstone of this strategy was asking the team to consider if they really understood the personal history of every resident and if that information was being used in a holistic way for care and engagement. He looked at his co-workers and said, **"Things have to change! We have to treat people as people, not patients."**

Steve Hatlestad
Senior VP, Skilled Nursing Division
Agent of Culture Change



Americare
senior living

Linked Senior helps Americare keep residents meaningfully engaged.

Once this culture took hold, resident satisfaction surveys at Americare communities went sky high and the organization ranked as 8th best in the country for resident satisfaction. This in turn converted into employee satisfaction and less staff turnover. Occupancy in their skilled nursing community improved and they took their message on the road, becoming known for their commitment to culture change and meeting the needs of all residents. Technology supported every community's ability to improve the resident experience in an efficient way. Especially during the pandemic, Americare turned to Linked Senior to keep every resident meaningfully engaged. **The technology helped prevent social isolation, could be used by residents in their own rooms during the lockdowns and allowed every older adult to connect with engagement they enjoyed.** The organization saw that quality measures started to improve which in turn helped positively impact business indicators.

Americare Activity Director Jeanne Lawrence confirmed the importance of technology in optimizing culture change across the organization. She shared, "There are some very useful options on Linked Senior. In my case, I had very specific people that I utilized this with and who benefit from it. These are people who it would be difficult to engage otherwise." The technology not only supports resident health and wellbeing but is also an important tool for staff. Michelle Tolbert, an Americare Nursing Home Administrator who has worked in the field for 20 years and started her career in the Activities Department shared that, "We haven't got back to where we were with activities prior to COVID but technology like Linked Senior has really empowered the team. We are moving in the right direction."

When Steve thinks about the future of the senior living industry, he believes that we have to be more efficient in how we care for people without losing the person-centered aspect of service, and technology certainly has a role to play here. Staff is so important to outcomes and enabling team members to fully engage with residents meaningfully by providing them with the best tools and resources is going to be the key as we look to the future.

**"...technology like
Linked Senior has really
empowered the team."**

Jeanne Lawrence, Activities
Director, Heritage Nursing Center

Americare's dedication to culture change benefited all aspects of the organization.

- ✓ Increased Resident Satisfaction
- ✓ Increased Staff Satisfaction
- ✓ Reduced Turnover
- ✓ Higher Occupancy

