IS RTLS FOR YOU? 5 WAYS IT CAN HELP YOUR TEAM RIGHT NOW

Until now, Real Time Location Systems (RTLS) have been a nice to have for communities. From showing you dots on the screen to helping manage two residents that don't get along, everyone exposed to an infectious condition, and everything in between, RTLS has grown into a serious and useful set of applications that help operators and caregivers become more efficient and effective.

What is RTLS? It leverages receivers, also referred to as locators or access points, to receive wireless signals from "tags" attached to a person or piece of equipment within the care center environment. The RTLS system collects data as it flows in, categorizes it, and then makes it visible on a computer software system.

According to McKnight's *Long-Term Care News,* "Application of this technology has expanded to include even more substantial care-related uses such as patient/resident monitoring, safety and security measures, staff workflow applications, and time-stamped visibility and understanding of specific milestones in the care process."

Modern RTLS creates an intelligent web of information, generating data and insights that providers can leverage to make better, more informed decisions regarding the delivery of care. Is it for you? If you deal with any of the following issues, it could be:

1. Location and asset management
2. Infection management
3. Resident safety
4. Pre-emptive care insight
5. Data transparency for families

1. Location and Asset Management

It's inevitable that some residents will rub each other the wrong way. Keeping them apart, so they don't disrupt the activities of those around them, can be a challenge for caregivers. eCall systems with RTLS can help. It's easy to set up proximity alerts to notify a caregiver when two people whom you're trying to keep apart, are near each other. The nearest caregiver can intercept and redirect one and avoid an incident for all. The same technology works for equipment: If Martha, who requires an oxygen tank, leaves her apartment without it, the nearest caregiver receives an alert as soon as Martha walks away from that equipment. Problem averted!

2. Infection Management

Contact tracing, social distancing and isolation management have become common terms in our post-pandemic world. RTLS makes all three much easier. RTLS makes contact tracing—identifying the people exposed to an illness—as easy as pushing a few buttons. When an eCall system knows where residents, staff and visitors are at all times, identifying the people who've been near an exposed person, within a defined period of time, and the level of exposure is as easy as selecting a few parameters. No need for in-person interviews and "guessing" who was in the room.

COVID taught us that social distancing is an incredibly useful tool in minimizing the spread of any infectious disease. RTLS makes this much simpler. Using an RTLS-enabled eCall system, a community can define the number of people allowed in a room at any given time. When residents, caregivers and even visitors wear RTLS-aware pendants, identifying when a room has reached capacity is easy, and an alert goes out to the caregivers in the room to limit entrance. No counting needed!

RTLS-enabled eCall systems also make it easier to keep isolated or quarantined residents in their confined spaces and others out. Using RTLS technology, a Nursing Director can geofence a room with a click of a button. When the perimeter is broken, an alert goes out to the nearest caregiver. At the same time, caregivers approaching the room receive a notification of the appropriate PPE to use with the resident.

3. Resident Safety

When an eCall system includes RTLS, a community can use it to detect when a known wanderer is near an exit. By setting a geofence around an exit or exterior room, caregivers receive an alert when someone is loitering near that exit. They can quickly intercept the resident and prevent them from wandering.

4. Pre-emptive Care

It's difficult to detect minute changes in a resident's health, especially when you don't see them happening in real time. Artificial intelligence and machine learning can help. Whereas staff members may only see a resident several hours a day, AI can capture information from multiple sources, correlate and analyze it, and use it to make a prediction. For example, if Barbara typically uses a restroom four times in one day and has already used it four times this morning, AI-based insights could send an alert to a caregiver that she may have a Urinary Tract Infection. That's the power of AI and RTLS together.

5. Data Transparency

Family members are more involved than ever in a resident's care decisions. With technology, especially RTLS, it's easier than ever to provide data transparency to families. Because of RTLS, family members can see the time residents get up every day, the activities they attend, and even their socialization trends. This type of transparent data helps families shoulder the responsibility for the resident's care needs, and gives them confidence that they are in the right community.

RTLS Delivers Real Operational Advantages

Providing resident care in a senior living community is a challenging job. Staff and caregivers have a variety of demanding responsibilities. RTLS is and will continue to be a leading indicator of a first-class community. It signals to tech savvy employees, residents and families that you're doing everything in your power to promote resident health, safety, and wellbeing.

Ensure360℠ is a powerful platform that combines RTLS with sophisticated eCall and intelligence to answer who, what, when, where, and why. Armed with these powerful insights, staff can move from reacting to an event to preventing one. The result is improved care, reduced staff burden, and increased family peace of mind.

Sources:
[1] McKnight's Long-term Care News. RTLS: What to know for today's senior care communities. https://www.mcknights.com/marketplace/rtls-what-to-know-for-todays-senior-care-communities/
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