

WHITE PAPER

Regroup for the Long-Term Care Environment



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INTRODUCTION

The importance of clear and reliable methods of mass communication is readily apparent in front line healthcare facilities such as emergency rooms and hospitals. However, it could be reasonably argued that the need is even greater in the context of long-term care and assisted living facilities.

This sector of the healthcare industry faces unique challenges with the dual role of being both healthcare provider and residential manager. Challenges compounded by the trust that is placed upon them by the loved ones of those in their care.

In September 2016, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) finalized a series of improvements designed to bolster the safety of residents in long-term care facilities, as well as enhance consumer protections and overall quality of life.

According to the CMS, there are over 1.5 million residents, distributed amongst the over 15,000 individual facilities, that participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Each of these facilities require a well-trained staff of medical, security and logistical personnel who can quickly communicate with each other in the event of an emergency.



THE HEIGHTENED RISKS OF STORM THREAT



Less than a month after the CMS improvements were announced, the threat of Hurricane Matthew resulted in the mass evacuation of nearly 2 million people along the Atlantic coast. Administrative staff at long-term care facilities are given some measure of autonomy in regards to either evacuating or taking shelter in a safe area of the facility itself.

However, this decision is now tempered by the results of an NCBI study, published in 2012, showing the often fatal effects of evacuating residents with dementia. The study examined data from both Hurricanes Katrina and Gustav, and concluded there was a troubling rise of deaths for residents who were evacuated during both of these events.

With this in mind, and the paths of oncoming hurricanes always changing, the decision to stay or evacuate is often determined on a moment by moment basis. The need for assisted living staff to be able to coordinate with each other, in real time, in these situations is critical to the welfare of their residents. This was demonstrated when Hurricane Matthew eventually took an unexpected turn that resulted in far less damage than was initially forecast, and many evacuations turned out to be unnecessary.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN

An NCBI study, published in 2012, showing the often fatal effects of evacuating residents with dementia.



ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENTS AND WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

A recent study by OSHA has found that incidents of workplace violence were four times more common in the healthcare industry than in the private sector. The study showed that from 2002 to 2013, the health care and social assistance sector had 7.8 cases of workplace violence per 10,000 full-time employees.

In contrast, other sectors such as construction, manufacturing and retail had fewer than two. A major factor in this increased risk, as cited by OSHA, was the lack of proper emergency communications being in place when incidents break out.





Cheyenne Nursing Home Shooting

One of the victims was shot inside the complex, on Cheyenne's northeast side, and the other two were shot outside, Long said.



The largest source of this violence was found to be patients themselves and, in the case of assisted living facilities, there is a high profile example of this in recent news. In September of 2016, a resident of a senior assisted living facility in Cheyenne, Wyoming opened fire on his fellow residents, killing one and wounding two before taking his own life.

AN INDUSTRY WITH MULTIPLE MOVING PARTS, MADE MANAGEABLE

Assisted living and long-term care facilities consist of multiple departments and sub-departments with their own unique policies and procedures. Coordinating and enabling all of these departments to work harmoniously requires a communication method that can reach all appropriate staff members precisely when needed.

This not only applies to emergency situations, but the day-to-day operations of the facilities as well. Schedule changes and policy updates that require all staff members' attention and/or compliance can be communicated rapidly and inexpensively using modern methods.

NEXT STEPS

Regroup is an industry leader in providing a platform for mass notifications within complex organizations, particularly those in the healthcare industry. Providing the latest clinical communication and collaboration technology, secure cloud-based operations that are still accessible even when local services are out or damaged and rapid messaging, Regroup is the service of choice for organizations like the Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County, Wyoming, the Point Venture Department of Emergency Management and many others.

To find out more about how Regroup can assist in keeping all staff members within your organization on the same page, you can contact us at **855-REGROUP** or via email at **inquiries@regroup.com**.

