



eBook

Senior Living Medication Management Practices Survey

Understanding the Landscape and Challenges
Senior Living Communities Face in
Managing and Administering Medications

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Executive Summary

Senior living leaders want medication management to be simple for their staff and need to work effectively with their pharmacy partners to improve resident wellness. Nothing is more important to a resident's health than managing their medication safely and accurately.

Over 200,000 older adults are hospitalized annually due to adverse drug events.¹ Sixty percent of the adverse drug events in seniors are preventable.²

To better understand the challenges senior living communities face in managing and administering medications, we conducted a survey of health and wellness directors, executive directors, clinical services directors, and other similar titles from freestanding assisted living communities across the United States, as well as communities representing combinations of assisted living and independent living, assisted living and memory care, and assisted living, memory care, and independent living.

Continue reading to learn about the current state of medication management in senior living and the top challenges.

¹ <https://www.agingcare.com/articles/medication-problems-elderly-people-have-146111.htm>

² <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/20503121211039099>





There are many challenges when it comes to medication management in senior living communities, which are exacerbated by the daily struggle to provide consistent, quality care while battling an alarming increase in staffing shortages. Our team is focused on finding new ways to help our senior living customers work more efficiently and safely, ultimately driving exceptional resident experience and optimal health outcomes.

Travis Palmquist

Senior Vice President and General Manager of Emerging Markets
PointClickCare

Executive Summary – Impacts to Wellness and Safety

200%



There was a 200% increase in polypharmacy over 20 years

Impact 

Seniors are hospitalized due to serious side effects from one or more medications. Unnecessary hospitalizations generate billions of dollars in costs.

50%



50% Staff Turnover in Senior Living

Impact 

Staffing shortages cause many problems, such as decreased caregiver availability to residents, reduced care continuity, and decreases in revenue. Staffing challenges are expected to get worse, especially as baby boomers retire.

18 Million



Between 2020 and 2030 the number of older adults is projected to increase by almost 18 million

Impact 

2030 marks the year when all baby boomers will be older than 65, comprising 20% of the population, and more seniors will need more care. Seven out of 10 people will require assisted living care in their lifetime. The aging population, especially those over 85 years, often suffer from complex health conditions. Nearly 95% of older adults have at least one chronic condition, and nearly 80% have multiple chronic conditions.

600,000



Older adults (65 years or older) visit emergency departments more than 600,000 times each year, more than twice as often as younger persons

Impact 

One of the most common reasons for hospital visits among older adults is due to preventable medication errors. A primary cause is communication breakdowns between the prescribing provider, pharmacy, and wellness team. The need for better communication and information between the various care team members will continue to grow.

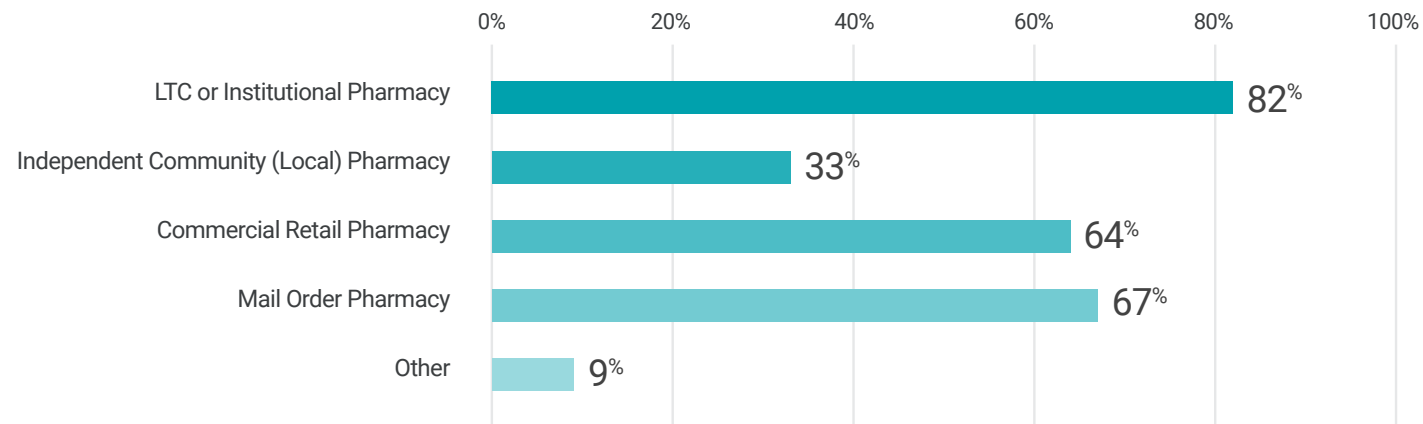
Current Pharmacy Landscape



Types of Pharmacies Used by Current Residents

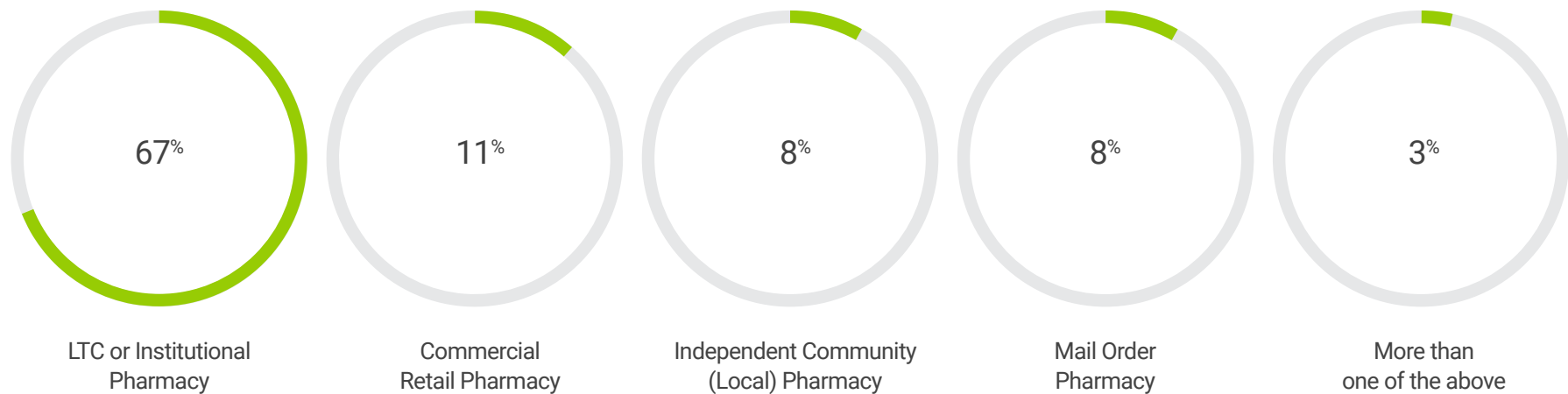
Senior living residents use multiple types of pharmacies. Long-term care (LTC) pharmacies had the highest percentage of use, followed by mail order pharmacies, and then commercial retail pharmacies.

Types of Pharmacies Used by Current Residents (Multiple Responses Allowed)



Pharmacy Used Most Consistently by Current Residents

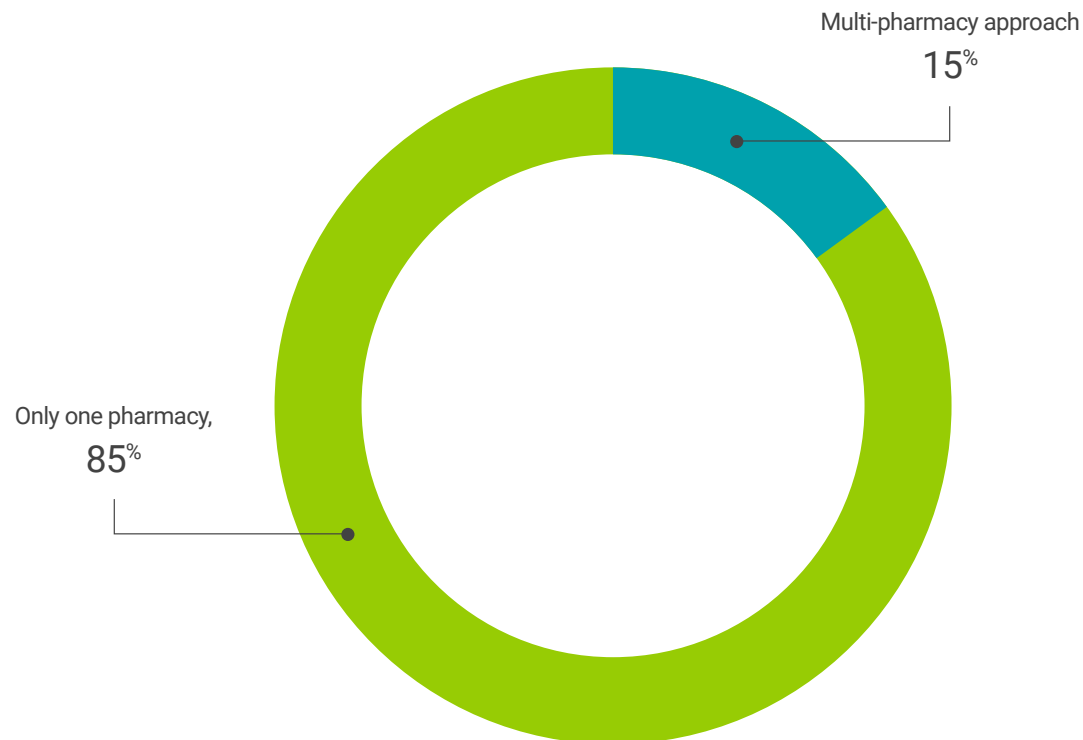
Many senior living communities offer the services of LTC/Institutional pharmacies to provide a better experience for their residents. These pharmacies offer delivery services, technology, and advanced packaging. LTC pharmacies are more commonly used by residents than other types of pharmacies.



Resident Pharmacy Use

The majority of senior living residents have seen value in participating in the service offering of senior living communities that partner with an LTC pharmacy to fill their required prescriptions.

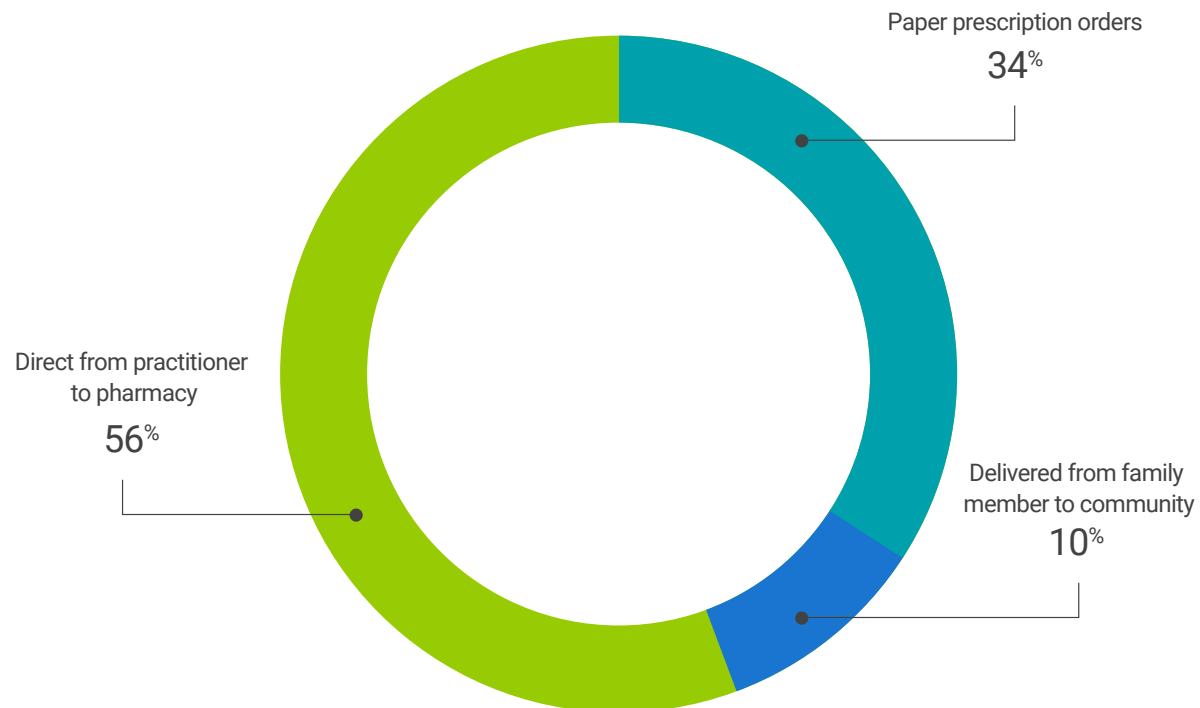
What Percentage of Residents Use The Following Most Consistently?



Resident Prescription Orders

More than half of resident prescription orders are filed directly via the practitioner ePrescribing or communicating directly with the pharmacy.

What Percentage of Resident Prescription Orders Are:





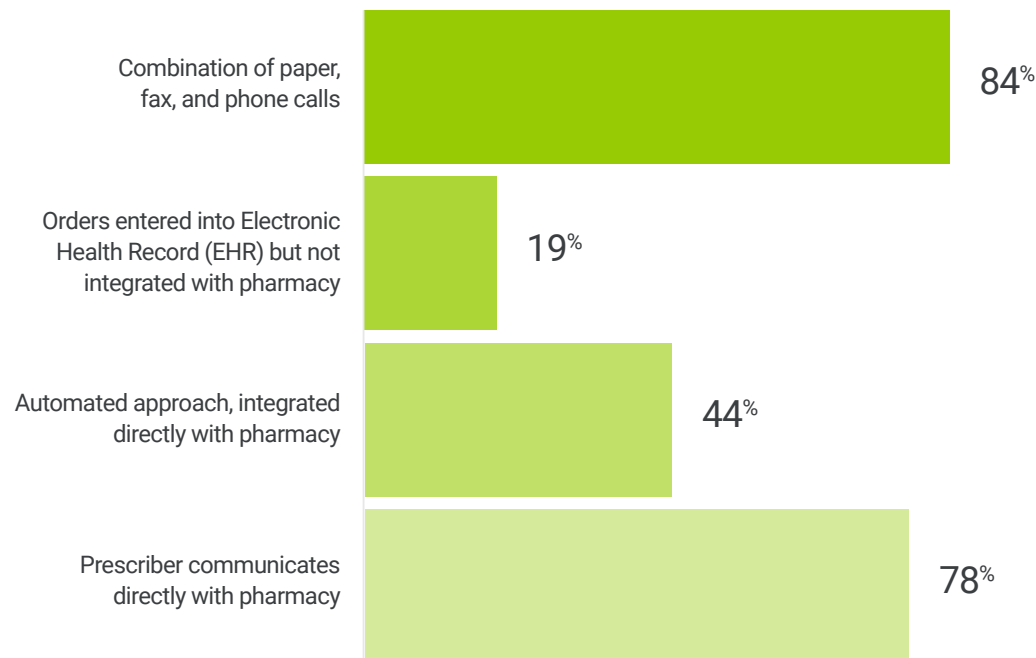
Current Medication Management



How the Community Manages Resident Prescription Orders

The majority of communities still do part of their prescription orders manually using a combination of paper, fax, and phone calls and another large majority indicate that prescribers communicate directly with pharmacy. Almost half are using an automated approach through integration directly with the pharmacy.

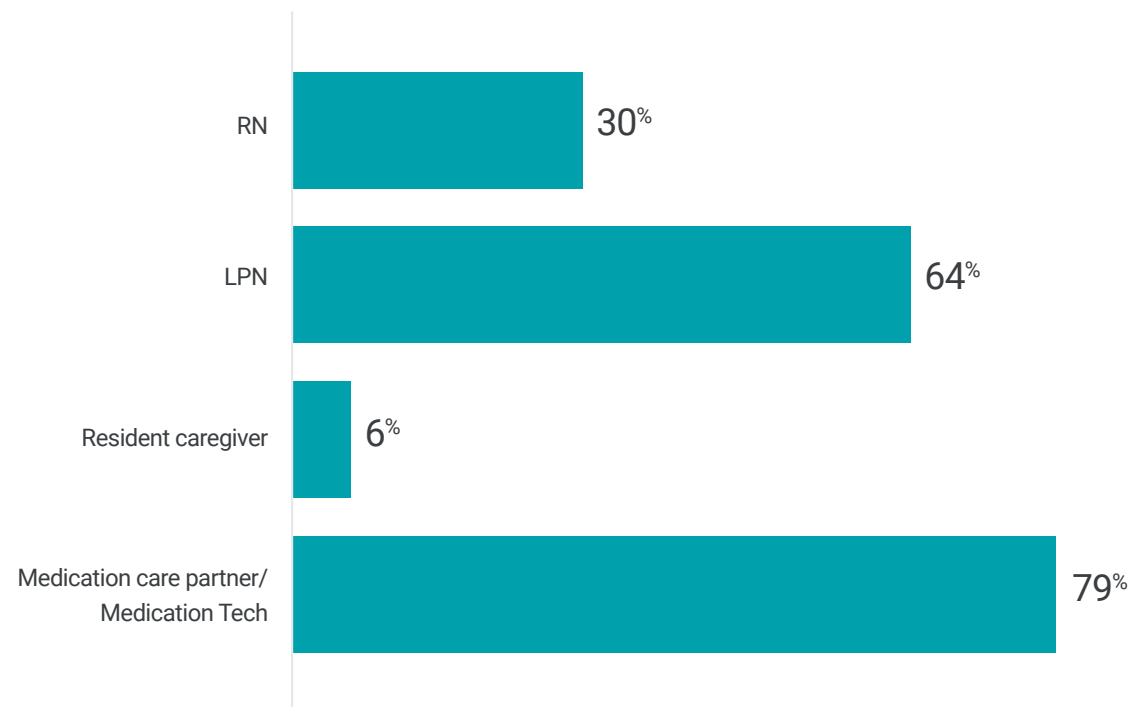
(Multiple Responses Allowed)



Roles Dispensing Medications to Residents

The vast majority of roles dispensing medications are medication technicians or medication care partners, with a strong presence of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) as well. It is becoming more prevalent that medication technicians are the responsible team member for dispensing medications to residents.

Who is Responsible for Dispensing Medications to Residents (Multiple Responses Allowed)



Errors, Challenges, and Improvements



Errors, Challenges, and Improvements



Primary Causes for Medication Errors

- Lack of attention to detail
- Medications not on hand
- Delayed ordering / filling



Primary Challenges of Medication Management

Many respondents cited a general communication failure between the prescribing practitioner, pharmacy, and medication technician passing the medication to residents.



Improvements to Medication Management Process

- Communication between pharmacy and other parties involved
- Converting all residents to a single pharmacy



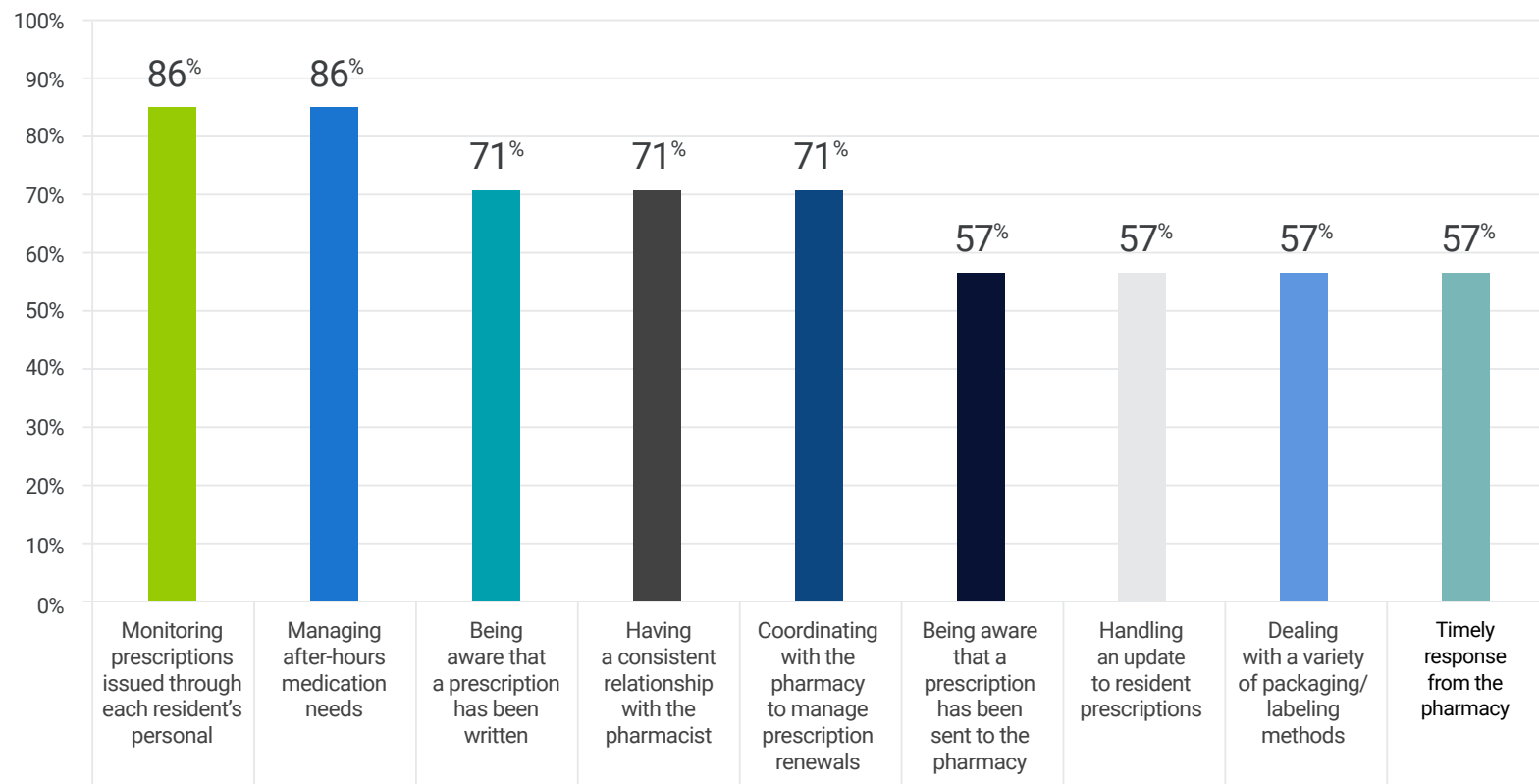
Primary Barriers to Adopting New Technologies

- Cost of purchasing and implementation
- Time required
- Learning curve

Medication Order Management Challenges for Senior Living Communities Lacking Direct Integration With an Institutional Pharmacy

Survey respondents who are not currently integrating with a long-term care pharmacy partner indicated the various challenges associated with integrated medication order management. Fifty percent or more of the respondents rated the following benefits as being “challenging”.

% of Respondents Indicating Challenges



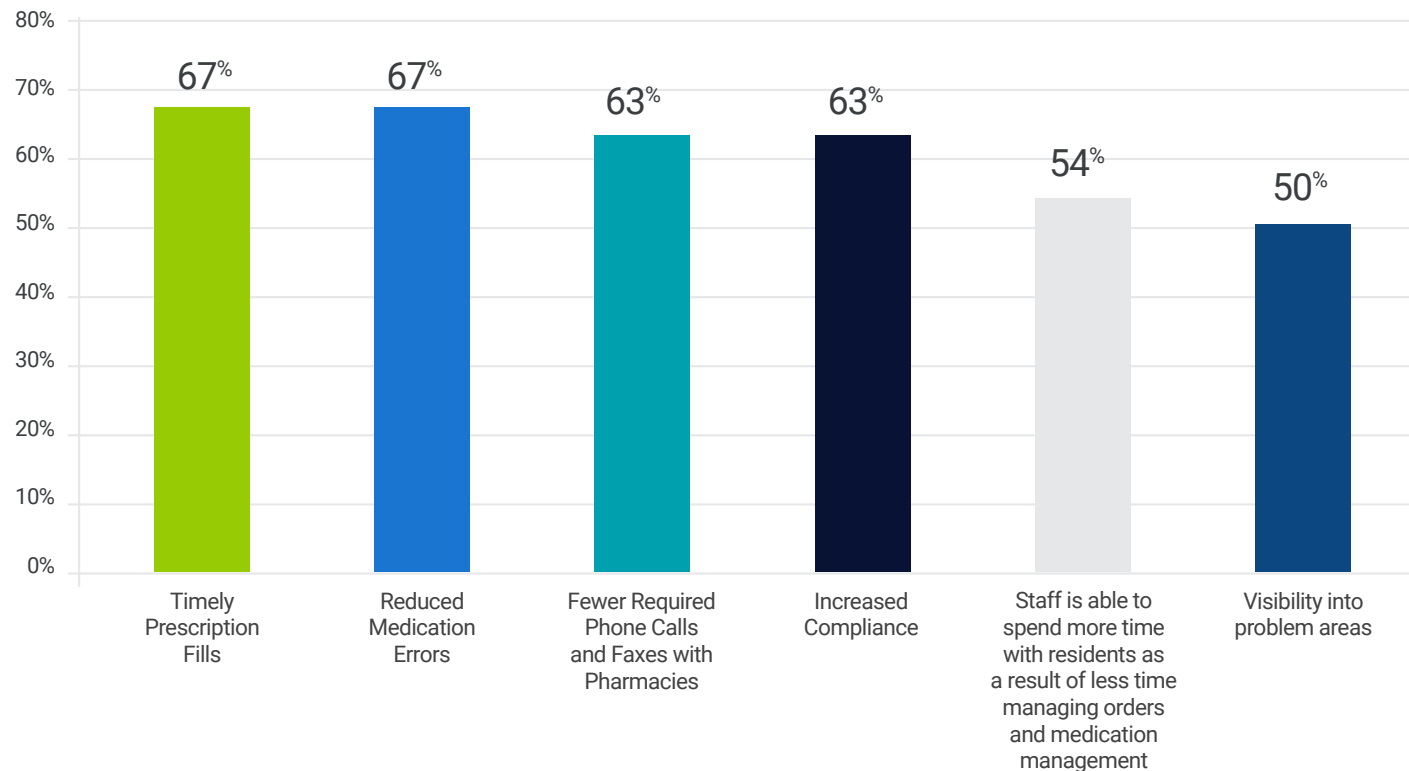
Benefits of Medication Management Integration



Benefits Associated With Medication Order Management Integration

Survey respondents who are currently integrating with their long-term care pharmacy partner via their EHR/eMAR rated the various benefits associated with integrated medication order management. Fifty percent or more respondents rated the following benefits as being “significant”

% Significant Benefit

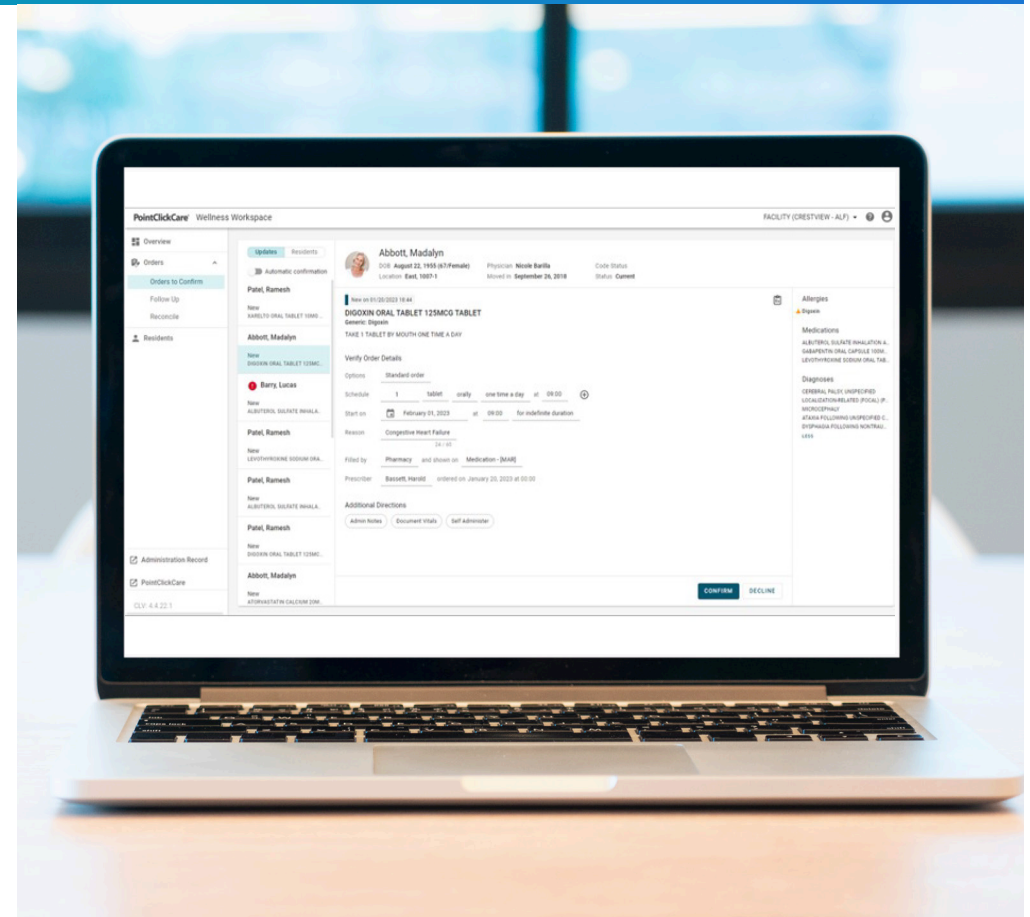


Conclusion

As senior living staffing challenges, resident acuity, and the quantity of medications has risen, it has become even more important that senior living leaders are providing their wellness teams with simple medication management tools and a strong relationship with their pharmacy partners to improve resident wellness.

Modernizing medication management for senior living requires engagement and a collaborative approach that enables users in the workflow with better visibility, efficiency, and intuitive technology. By directly linking the senior living community to their preferred pharmacy, they are not only reducing manual interactions and allowing for faster availability of medications, but they are also enabling a reduction of medication errors.

Ultimately, providing better medication management allows senior living staff to reclaim valuable time and focus more on the wellness of the residents.



Your Solution to Simplified Senior Living Medication Management

PointClickCare Pharmacy Connect: medication management reimaged and built specifically for wellness nurse teams and the pharmacies that support them

[Learn More](#)