



eBook

# Key Priorities and Opportunities for Innovation in Skilled Nursing Facilities

A Guide for Skilled Nursing Organizations on Remaining at the Forefront of Care Delivery

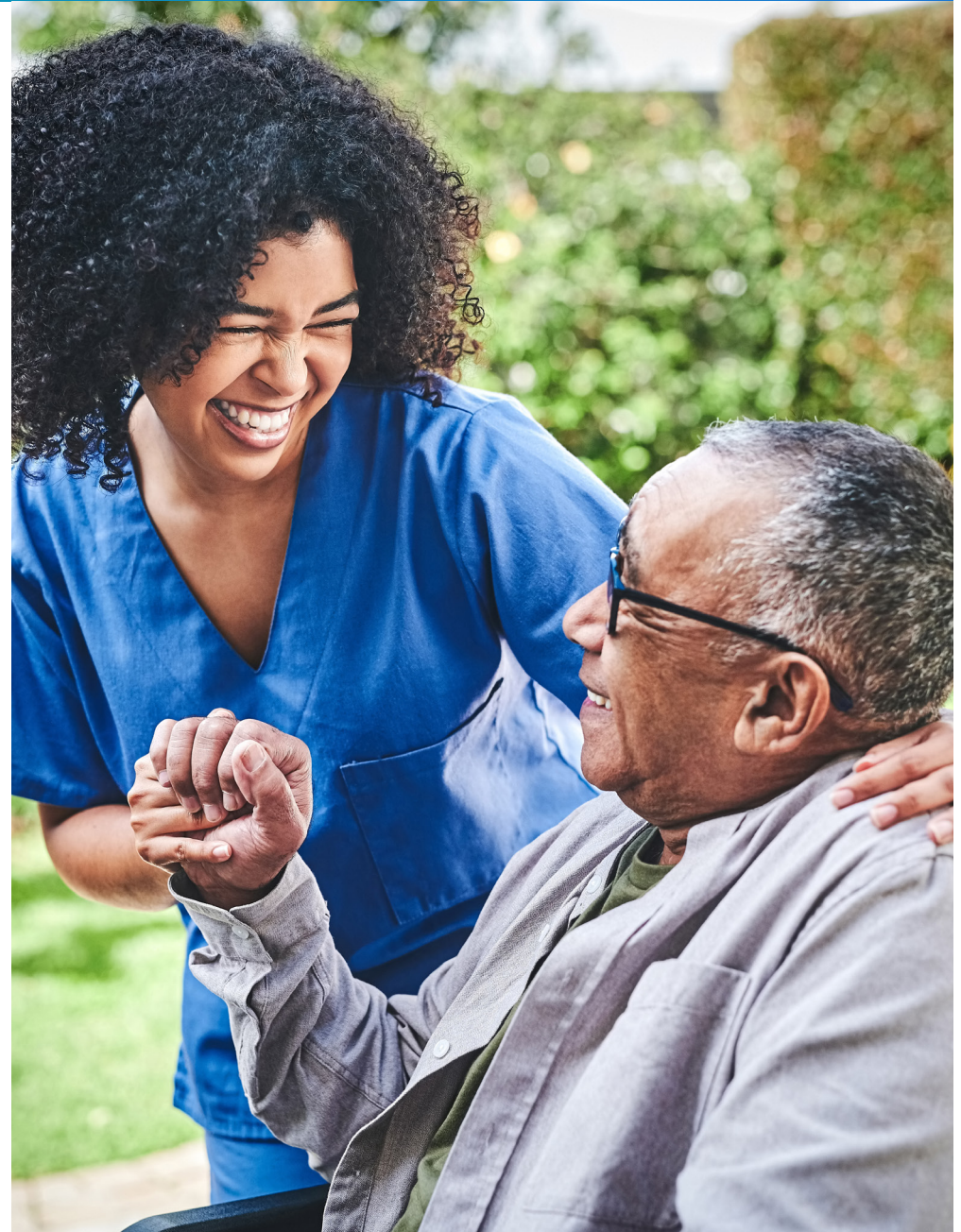
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**PointClickCare®**



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# Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated technology adoption across healthcare, and skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) have not been an exception to this phenomenon. To address shifting efficiency needs during the public health emergency, SNFs leaned into technology solutions to support high-quality care.

Standing as a testament to their necessity and resilience, these facilities have been around in one form or another since the turn of the 20th century, evolving into their modern iteration in the decades after the passage of amendments to the Social Security Act in 1965 that launched Medicare and Medicaid.

In the last few decades, many key events have shaped the SNF industry, requiring new strategies to meet changes to policy, regulations, and technology. Today, SNFs are navigating new challenges such as a critical staffing shortage, an increase in acute care needs, aging facilities, and systemic strain due to a rise in SNF closures.

Remaining nimble requires an understanding of what has brought SNFs to where they are today, with an eye to what must be done to stay on the cutting edge of care delivery and being adaptable to the changing needs of the market. This includes an awareness of the technology solutions that can support improved compliance, streamline care coordination, and enhance care outcomes.



In this e-book, we examine SNFs in their current state, identify key challenges, and look at ways successful organizations have leveraged technology to innovate and optimize SNF operations, care coordination, and efficiency.







## Where We Are Today: Key Events That Shaped Senior Care Today







## Where We Are Today: Key Events That Shaped Senior Care Today

Beginning in the 2000s, the SNF industry saw significant regulatory changes related to Medicare reimbursements for care, and what metrics demonstrate successful care outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

One watershed example of this is the introduction of the Medicare Five-Star Quality Rating System in 2008, which modernized the existing Nursing Home Compare tool.<sup>2</sup> This program allows consumers to more easily compare outcomes across SNFs by rating organizations based on quality ratings and Minimum Data Set (MDS)-submitted care quality data. These Star Ratings indicate a SNF's success in delivering high-quality care across several domains, including measurable outcomes deemed priority by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).<sup>3</sup>

The subsequent introduction of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010, along with accountable care organizations (ACOs), has further encouraged the adoption of value-based care (VBC), which continues to drive the healthcare industry's approach to improving quality care delivery.

Following the ACA, in 2014 the Improving Medicare Post-Acute Care Transformation Act aimed to enhance the quality and efficiency of post-acute care by standardizing payment models and improving care coordination for Medicare beneficiaries. This included the SNF Quality Reporting Program, creating SNF quality reporting requirements.<sup>4</sup>

Lastly, the 21st Century Cures Act, enacted in 2016, mandated the creation of the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) to improve health information exchange across disparate networks. TEFCA laid the groundwork for interoperability by establishing a standardized framework and governance model for secure, nationwide health information exchange through Qualified Health Information Networks (QHINs), promoting seamless interoperability, patient access, and compliance with federal rules, thereby supporting value-based care.

Each regulatory change has presented an opportunity for SNFs to leverage technology solutions to help them advance their ability to collaborate across the care continuum and gain insights into how they could meet the needs of their residents while also fulfilling their responsibility to meet key benchmarks set by CMS.

At PointClickCare, emphasis has been placed on remaining both adaptable and responsive to the data-driven needs of SNFs throughout this period of change and innovation. As the market leader supporting regulatory changes, PointClickCare has invested in ongoing product research and development, as well as providing industry support and education as changes have been enacted.

"PointClickCare has done a really nice job of thinking about how technology can solve the challenges our customers are faced with when the payment model shifts," explains Kelly McAndrew, PointClickCare Director of Product Communications. "We connect people and providers with the right information at the right time embedded in their workflow."

Additionally, customer engagement and feedback plays a vital role in continuing to stay on the leading edge of technology solutions, whether it's through the online community known as [Pulse](#), which currently has 10,000 active participants, or at networking opportunities such as the PointClickCare SUMMIT and [Care Collaboration](#) conferences.

Throughout the past two-plus decades and counting, some ongoing trends have emerged as key priorities for SNFs to continue to adapt to changing industry needs.



## Challenge/Priority #1: Seamless Information-Sharing





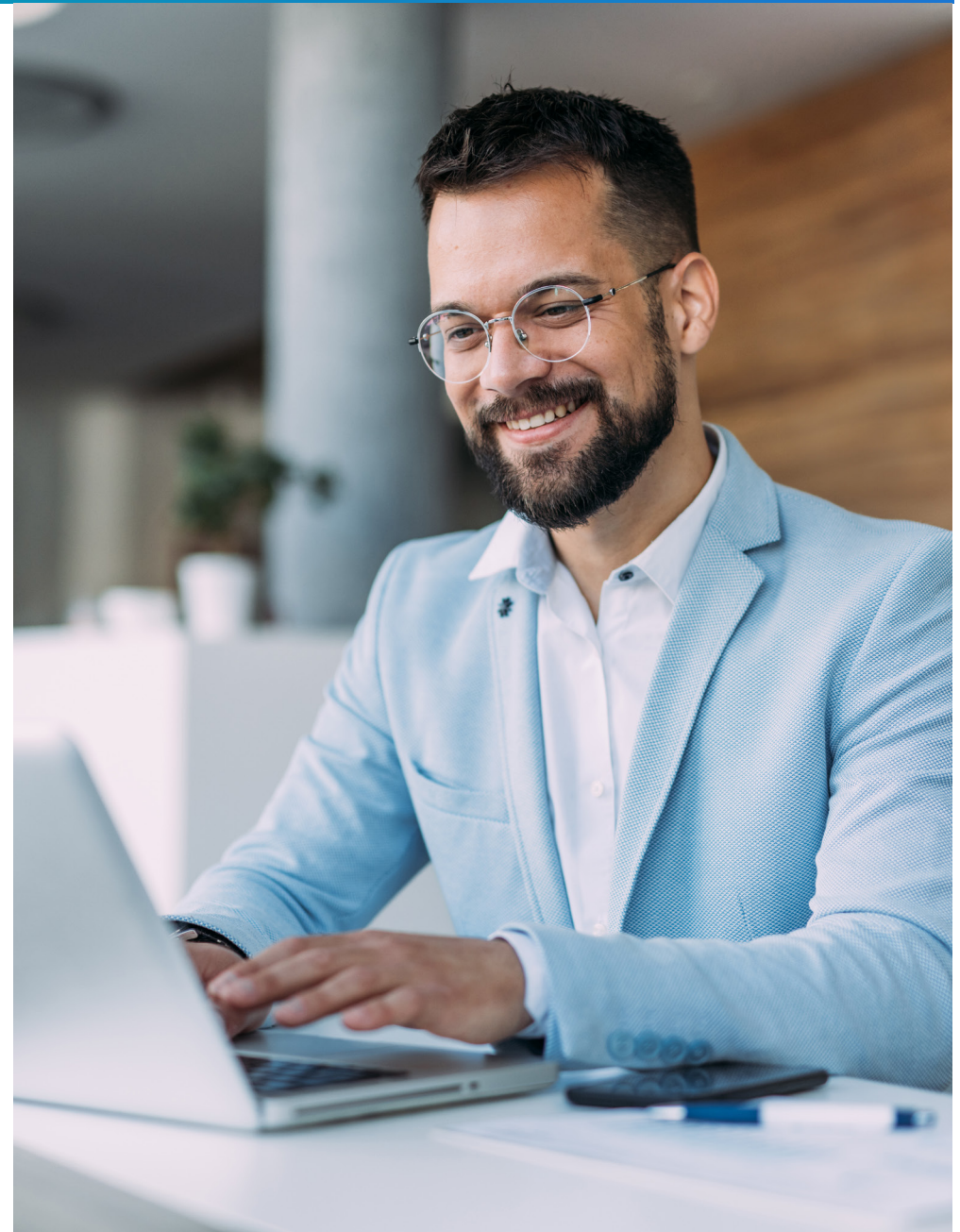
## Challenge/Priority #1: Seamless Information-Sharing

By 2019, EHR adoption in SNFs was as high as 84% in one survey.<sup>5</sup> However, the same survey also indicated that only a small number of respondents were able to leverage their health information technology (HIT) to share patient information across care settings. Interoperability, then, remains an ongoing challenge. Recognizing this, CMS has looked to prioritize interoperability by establishing incentive programs for some providers.<sup>6</sup>

Without technology-driven information sharing and care coordination capabilities, SNFs are in the dark when it comes to fully participating in electronic Health Information Exchanges (HIEs).<sup>7</sup>

The exchange of data between acute and post-acute providers facilitates visibility into SNF performance against value-based benchmarking, supports comprehensive quality reporting, and provides the feedback and collaboration needed to drive improved patient outcomes and more efficient care.

One specific area that illustrates this well is hospital readmissions, one of the Five-Star quality measures.<sup>8</sup> Among the many VBC initiatives that have sprung up over the past several years, reducing hospital readmissions, for example through the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP), remains an urgent priority for providers across the continuum.<sup>9</sup> For SNFs, reducing rehospitalizations means they help control costs across the continuum of care, and clear visibility into patient EHR data across the continuum is essential to do this.<sup>10</sup>







## Challenge/Priority #2: Optimize Clinical Outcomes







## Challenge/Priority #2: Optimize Clinical Outcomes

In the previous example, reduced readmissions are a clear indicator of improved clinical outcomes. But that is only one measure; with the continued rise of VBC, which is also tied to reimbursement, SNFs must optimize clinical outcomes or also grapple with financial shortfalls, further impacting staffing and infrastructure needs.

The readmission rates and many other quality measures are reflected in the Five-Star Quality Rating System hold significant weight. Many of these quality measures are also included in the SNF Quality Reporting program.

Health information technology plays a crucial role in successfully meeting VBC goals and optimizing clinical outcomes and the ability to provide consistent, high-quality, well-documented care. Research supports the positive effect of HIT on outcomes, allowing SNFs to identify high-risk residents in real time, share critical resident information across care transitions, and ensure all quality benchmarks are addressed and consistently documented.<sup>11</sup>





## Challenge/Priority #3: Improve Financial Health





## Challenge/Priority #3: Improve Financial Health

Historically, SNFs have operated on tight margins, and in the post-COVID-19 era they have felt the strain even more, with rising healthcare costs, increased acuity, and variability in Medicare reimbursement all impacting the bottom line.<sup>12</sup>

There are several common opportunities to improve success when it comes to a SNF's financial health:

- Reducing administrative burdens associated with Medicare Advantage (which also typically offers lower per-resident reimbursement)
- Increasing case-mix index
- Increasing revenue per patient
- Maintaining accurate and complete billing
- Capturing increased reimbursement rates

Each of these requires innovative technology solutions to support efficiency, accuracy, and provide a holistic view of the organization and its residents.





## Challenge/Priority #3: Improve Financial Health



### Reducing Administrative Burdens

Unlike Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) models, Medicare Advantage (MA) plans require extensive administrative documentation to demonstrate that performance metrics have been met. Frequently, this administrative burden can distract from quality time spent caring for residents. This is even more true in the context of staffing shortages, requiring SNFs to find efficient solutions for accurately and consistently documenting interventions while returning time to direct care.



### Increasing Case-Mix Index

Increasing reimbursement levels with a higher case-mix index is multi-faceted. Not only is timely, accurate documentation of the care provided essential to proper case-mix reimbursement, but it also demonstrates to the SNF's larger network that they are the destination of choice for higher-acuity patients or those with specific conditions.



### Increasing Revenue Per Patient

Along with increasing case mix index, leveraging new SNFs insure a higher per-patient revenue.<sup>13</sup> However, many SNFs have found EHR implementation to be a significant barrier to successfully participating in PDPM, as well as accurately capturing all information needed for the best payment outcome.



### Maintaining Accurate and Complete Billing

Providing and documenting care is one thing, but successfully completing the last step of receiving payment for that care is another. Challenges in revenue cycle management can be a source of frustration and create revenue collection delays and increased accounts receivable. Robust technology that helps SNFs determine patient responsibility, facilitate timely billing, and seamlessly collect payments required to direct care.



### Capturing Increased Reimbursement Rates

Because supplemental payments are tied to quality measures, capturing optimal reimbursement rates comes down to effectively demonstrating metrics have been met with high-quality assessments, care delivery, and improved outcomes.





# Seamless Information-Sharing With PointClickCare



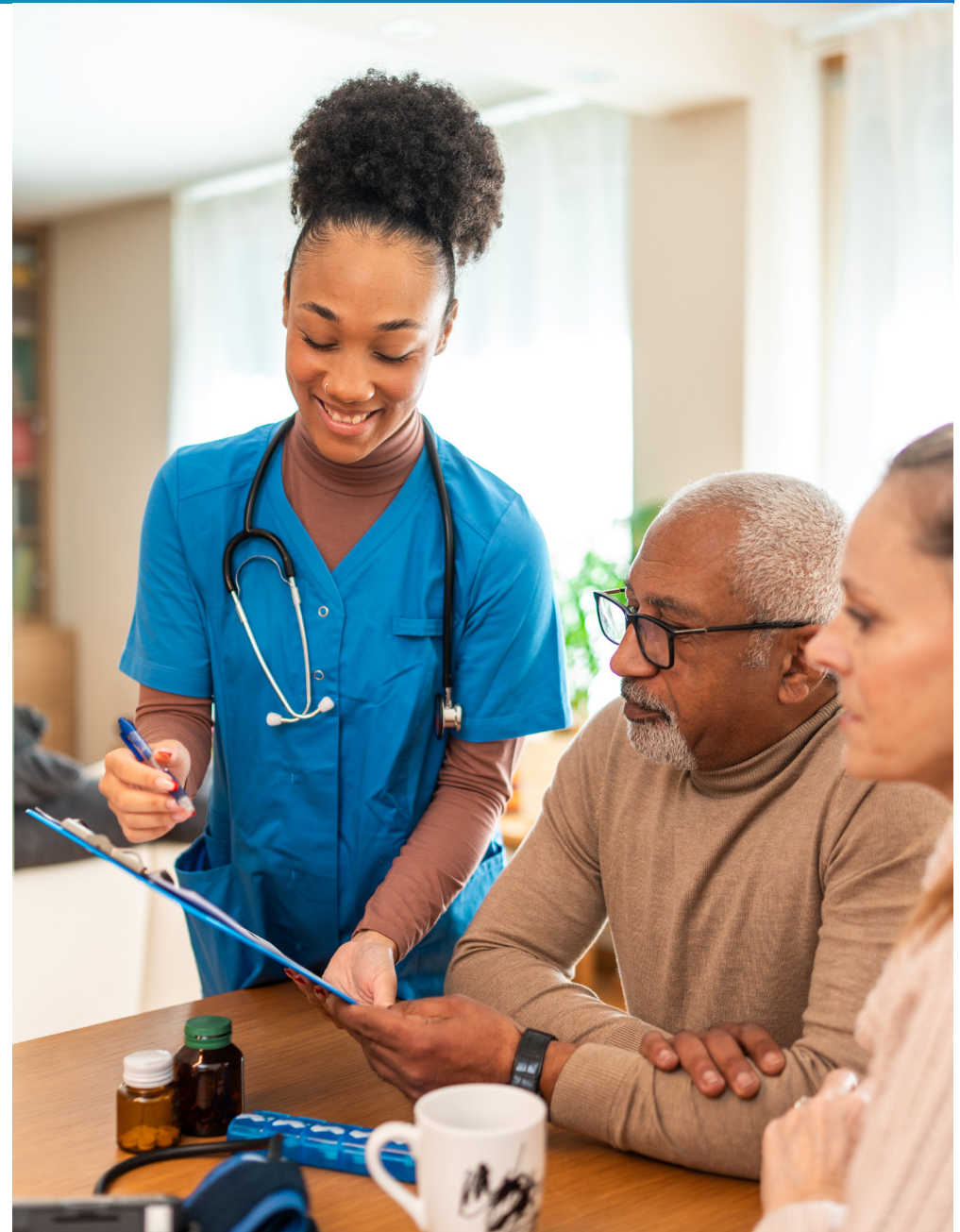
# Seamless Information-Sharing With PointClickCare

By enabling data sharing and interoperability within HIEs, PointClickCare offers SNFs access to the largest care collaboration network in the U.S.

“Our solutions are so critical for SNFs to understand their performance,” notes McAndrew. “Whether it’s how they’re doing on measures that relate to Star Ratings, or understanding their return-to-hospital rates, these insights help SNFs demonstrate they are a facility of choice within their network.”

PointClickCare’s **Advanced Insights** solution was built to provide organizational visibility into clinical, financial, and operational metrics, enhancing patient care, improving quality, and driving increased reimbursement. SNFs looking to update outdated and inefficient infrastructure gain these core features:

- **Performance Insights** — Offers actionable intelligence to boost performance with comprehensive analytics from one central location that increases efficiency and streamlines operations. This recognizes that evaluating quality care doesn’t just end there — actionable feedback is needed when performance initiatives are launched to improve gaps in care.
- **Market Insights** — Gives skilled nursing organizations the ability to use industry and PointClickCare data to know where they stand in their network, showcase their strength, and improve market share.







# Optimizing Clinical Outcomes With PointClickCare





# Optimizing Clinical Outcomes With PointClickCare

Improving clinical outcomes must include technology for nurses and practitioners, especially with critical staffing constraints in play. PointClickCare addresses this with a comprehensive package of tools for SNF clinicians that support them in thoroughly evaluating each resident's condition and proactively responding to changes, minimizing the risk of hospital readmission due to variability in care delivery. **These tools include:**

- **[Nursing Advantage](#)** — Ensures consistent, high-quality, well-documented care by providing SNF nurses with dynamic, diagnosis-based assessments and proactive clinical guidance.
- **[Skin & Wound](#)** — Improves care outcomes with an advanced mobile app designed for wound evaluation, documentation, and status communication across the care team. This removes variability in wound measurements, supports identification of at-risk residents to help meet VBC benchmarks, and minimizes the potential for litigation penalties.
- **[Infection Prevention and Control](#)** — Provides streamlined, fully integrated workflows to identify, manage, and report infections in real time. SNFs can increase awareness and understanding of cases, analyze and respond to emerging trends, and incorporate best practices for antibiotic stewardship, all in one tool.
- **[Practitioner Engagement](#)** — Provides convenient mobile access for practitioners to view charts, document progress notes, view and sign bulk orders, and e-prescribe for residents in their care.
- **[Virtual Health](#)** — Offers a fully integrated solution with one-click access to qualified clinicians on nights, weekends, and federal holidays, ensuring optimal care for residents, improved staff satisfaction, streamlined operations, and increased revenue opportunities.





## Improving Financial Health With PointClickCare







# Improving Financial Health With PointClickCare

PointClickCare's [EHR for SNF](#) not only helps organizations manage care effectively and provide staff instant access to the most up-to-date resident information to inform decisions and improve clinical outcomes, but it also streamlines billing, accounts receivable, collections, and automatic MDS submission to maximize revenue.

Solutions that support improved financial health include:

- [PDPM Coach](#) — Provides real-time verification to maximize reimbursement; a simple, intuitive, and efficient way to complete the 5-Day Admission Minimum Data Set (MDS) and improve financial outcomes.
- [Revenue Cycle Management](#) — Creates an accurate holistic financial view of an organization and streamlines billing, accounts receivable, collections and claims operations (via coding from Practitioner Engagement) to maximize revenue. It also provides residents with a secure and efficient trust fund management experience.







## Technology in Action: Two Case Studies





# Technology in Action: Two Case Studies

The stories speak for themselves: organizations who have leveraged PointClickCare see results that enhance their operational and clinical outcomes.



## Case Study #1:

### Ignite Medical and Optimizing Clinical Outcomes

With limited access to healthcare professionals outside of regular hours, Ignite Medical Resort experienced increased readmission rates for residents.

Within three months of  
implementing Virtual health,  
Ignite achieved a

**10% reduction**  
in readmission rates.



## Case Study #2:

### SunMar HealthCare and Improving Financial Health

SunMar Healthcare needed an efficient and accurate way to complete the 5-Day Admission MDS and improve financial forecasting and revenue management.

By **implementing PDPM Coach**, they  
experienced time savings from manual  
to digital documentation, saw a

**\$20 increase**

in per patient day (PPD)  
revenue generated and a

**6% increase**  
in their case mix index.





# On Becoming Future-Proof

In healthcare, change and challenges are constant. For SNFs, the best way to future-proof is to seek a reputable technology partner. The industry is still transitioning from FFS to VBC, which focuses on quality and outcomes of care. Organizations that aren't proactive about this shift may find themselves scrambling to catch up.

The right partner can not only readily support changes with innovative solutions, but also support SNFs [in connecting with integrated tools](#) that maximize their EHR. This approach ensures that a SNF is able to readily adapt to market needs, even when regulations change.

PointClickCare solutions are purpose-built to support SNFs in meeting their market needs. You can [watch this video](#) to see why partnering with PointClickCare is impactful, or contact us today to learn why skilled nursing providers across the U.S. trust PointClickCare with their success.

## Your Solution to Key Priorities and Opportunities for Innovation in Skilled Nursing Facilities

If you're ready to learn more about leveraging technology for real-time visibility into critical information needed to meet time-sensitive quality measures, request a demo today.

[Book a Demo](#)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kff.org/medicare/timeline/medicare-timeline/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/five-star-changes-nursing-home-compare>

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.cms.gov/provider-data/topics/nursing-homes/quality-measures>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/quality/snf-quality-reporting-program>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK584661/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/regulations-guidance/promoting-interoperability-programs>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.healthit.gov/topic/health-it-and-health-information-exchange-basics/what-hie>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/quality-initiatives-patient-assessment-instruments/nursinghomequalityinits/downloads/snfrm-technical-report-3252015.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/payment/prospective-payment-systems/acute-inpatient-pps/hospital-readmissions-reduction-program-hrrp>

<sup>10</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6874718/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5818676/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://skillednursingnews.com/2024/07/death-by-1000-cuts-nursing-homes-facing-financial-turbulence-amid-staffing-woes-low-pay-managed-care-pressures/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/payment/prospective-payment-systems/skilled-nursing-facility-snf/patient-driven-model>