3 WAYS TO REDUCE FALLS IN 2022
Fall prevention always has been, and always will be, a critical concern for senior living providers. As resident acuity rises in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic due to delayed move-ins, fall reduction and response come into sharper focus.

At the same time, operators are increasingly promoting health and wellness holistically, with technology supporting their efforts.

These efforts are being revolutionized by predictive technology with artificial intelligence (AI). Fall prevention is at last becoming a reality for providers.

This white paper explores the three key components of fall prevention, based on proven outcomes that have prevented falls, bolstered businesses and saved lives in the process.

The Need for Fall Prevention

Falls occur frequently among older adults, often leading to serious health consequences, as demonstrated by data from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC):

- **More than 1 in 4 people** 65 and older fall each year
- **One out of 5** falls result in serious injury, such as head trauma
- **Over 800,000 patients** a year are hospitalized due to fall injuries

The problem also is worsening, with fall-related death rates on the rise.
Fall Prevention Must Be Proactive

While most senior living providers have fall mitigation strategies in place, falls remain persistent, exacting a steep toll on both resident wellbeing and an operator’s bottom line.

Of the 267 assisted living claims that CNA Insurance closed in 2018, 49.4% involved allegations of a resident fall. On average, fall-related claims in assisted living were more costly than fall-related claims in other senior housing and care settings.

These statistics underscore how common and costly falls are in senior living—but the good news is that these numbers might look far different in the future, thanks to advances in technology.

“Historically, fall prevention could only be reactive, but with predictive AI solutions this has shifted to a truly proactive approach,” says Lauren Horn, RN, MSN, Director of Advanced Clinical Solutions in Senior Living for STANLEY Healthcare.

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Average total paid resident fall-related closed claims

by bed type

- AL $224,300
- SNF $187,774
- IL $112,118
- Overall Average
  TOTAL PAID $193,236

Source: Senior Housing News
KEY 1: Be Proactive Through Planning & Management

To prevent falls, operators must first have an understanding of why falls happen, which allows them to put in place the right protocols and ensure staff engagement.

Within senior living settings, residents fall due to a variety of factors. These factors include the resident’s medical, physical and mental conditions, as well as environmental factors, according to the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL). They include, but are not limited to:

- Weakness or loss of strength in muscles and bones
- Vision changes
- Cardiovascular difficulties
- Medication side effects
- Cluttered walkways
- Slippery floors
- Poor lighting

Given that so many factors can potentially lead to a resident falling, prevention requires engagement from all facets of operations, as well as an understanding of the changes that occur in the resident prior to the fall.

Bringing the whole team into the fall prevention effort—from maintenance workers to the executive director—is not easy, but is possible with the right coaching and education.

“Usually, team members are quite good if you just educate them, and they understand the importance of fall prevention. I think most people want to do the right thing,” says Kelly Kaspor, RN, Wellness Director at Provision Living at West Bloomfield, near Detroit.

FALL PREVENTION PROTOCOLS & BEST PRACTICES

There are a variety of protocols and best practices that senior living communities can and should implement to reduce falls and ensure a proper response when they do occur.

These include:

- Mandatory staff orientation and training in fall prevention
- Regular reassessment or continuous assessment of residents
- Monitoring compliance with policies and procedures related to resident transfers
KEY 2:
Make Predictive Technology Your Partner

With so many potential causes of resident falls, and the risk of falls in senior living being so high, even the most engaged teams with the most robust protocols can use a boost in fall prevention efforts. That boost is predictive technology.

STANLEY Healthcare’s Foresite solution is one example of this technology, and is built around the “4 Ps”: passive technology, predictive insights, proactive care, preventing falls and hospitalizations.

1. PASSIVE TECHNOLOGY

By utilizing sensors that are built into the senior living environment, Foresite gathers a range of data, including information about a resident’s gait, vital signs, sleep patterns and restroom use. Unlike wearables or other technology that requires resident activation, passive technology continuously and unobtrusively gathers data.

The resident experience is therefore not compromised, while their safety and wellbeing ultimately are enhanced.

2. PREDICTIVE INSIGHTS

Foresite also harnesses 20 years of historical resident data that has been deeply vetted.

“The important piece of the AI is to have algorithms that are built on millions of hours’ or years’ worth of data, and not just trying to build upon the here-and-now,” says Horn.

That is, Foresite’s algorithms, combined with what the system learns about a particular resident’s typical health indicators and habits, enables it to alert clinical staff to deviations that could mean an intervention is needed.
3. PROACTIVE CARE
By catching changes in condition and addressing issues early—for instance, treating a urinary tract infection before symptoms worsen—senior living providers can prevent falls and resulting hospitalizations.

The technology has advanced to the point where it can suggest even simple interventions that can dramatically reduce the risk of a resident fall, Horn says. Infrared technology can produce three-dimensional images of people, while safeguarding their privacy and preserving their dignity by not transmitting their faces and other details that would be captured by video.

“We’ve seen the system alert caregivers to specific changes in a resident, revealing a pattern of the resident getting dressed while holding onto their walker,” Horn says. “The caregiver is essentially alerted before a fall occurs, which allows the caregiver to provide appropriate interventions.”

4. PREVENTING FALLS AND HOSPITALIZATIONS
The effectiveness of predictive technology is revealed in the data.

Consider STANLEY Healthcare client Brentwood Health Care, a privately owned and operated assisted living and skilled nursing community. Falls decreased 48% from prior years after installing Foresite, while occupancy jumped to 100% with a waiting list.

Provision Living at West Bloomfield achieved a 67% reduction in falls and went 58 days without a fall.

“What I attribute that to is that it wasn’t a cookie cutter program,” Horn says. “They were using those predictive alerts and building something that was specific to each individual.”

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LAUREN HORN, RN, MSN
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCED CLINICAL SOLUTIONS
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Four Tips for Success from Provision Living of West Bloomfield

Provision Living of West Bloomfield utilized Foresite to achieve a 67% reduction in falls, going nearly 60 days without a fall. Here are four tips for success from Kelly Kaspior, RN, the community’s wellness director:

**LOG IN DAILY.** Kaspior logs into Foresite every morning to check system status, then reviews health alerts to determine if any residents need closer assessment.

**EDUCATE YOUR STAFF.** Staff are educated on how to respond to alerts that they receive on their mobile devices; for example, responding immediately to a bed exit alert for a resident at high fall risk.

**USE DATA AS A TEACHING TOOL.** Kaspior uses data to coach staff, rather than discipline them—for example, if caregivers are not performing wellness checks frequently enough, she educates them on the protocols and explains why they are important.

**SHARE DATA WITH PARTNERS.** Kaspior shares Foresite data with partners such as therapists, and clinical leaders at the corporate level, to determine action plans for residents.

Kaspior recommends that nurses and other clinical leaders in senior living take the time to learn the technology. They should not be intimated, she says.

“In the past, I’ve never really had this type of technology, and it was daunting at first... but once I started navigating through the program, and understanding it more and trusting it more, it’s been a really good tool,” she says. “It’s really, really helped me understand the residents better ... and helped me keep them out of the hospital, too.”
KEY 3:
When Falls Happen, Review, Address & Improve

The four Ps are effective in preventing falls, yet falls will still occur in senior living communities. Setting appropriate expectations with family members, residents and staff members is important—as well as having effective follow-up when a fall does occur.

Technology such as privacy-protecting infrared imaging is also transforming the follow-up process, not only helping caregivers provide the most appropriate post-fall care to the resident but also making it easier to determine the cause of a fall and therefore take steps to address those issues.

Essentially, providers are now better able to “rewind” to observe a fall and then “review” what happened and what should be done going forward. This can be especially useful with memory care residents, who are not able to describe what caused a fall. But not only are they able to review that fall, they are able to see the other data, such as vital signs, sleep patterns and gait analysis.

“When I do have a fall, I can view the recordings of the sensor, and I utilize that to help me come up with an intervention,” Kaspor says. “Maybe we’re finding that they’re getting up to use the bathroom... then I can put an intervention in place to make sure that at three in the morning, we go in and we toilet this resident.”

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KELLY KASPOR, RN
WELLNESS DIRECTOR
PROVISION LIVING OF WEST BLOOMFIELD
Conclusion

From a business perspective, senior living communities are beginning to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, with occupancy ticking up and operations back on a more normal footing.

However, many new residents are arriving frailer than has been typical in the past, as they deferred the move to senior living for months or even longer due to the pandemic. And long-time residents also are experiencing the effects from a year of limited mobility and less socializing—which contribute directly to fall risk factors such as loss of strength and depression.

Now is the time to invest in predictive technology that can help providers target their efforts, save money and—most importantly—safeguard each resident's health and well-being.
To learn more about using predictive technologies such as Foresite to improve senior living outcomes, contact us today.

About STANLEY Healthcare

Over 15,000 hospitals and senior living communities rely on STANLEY Healthcare solutions to empower caregivers to deliver better care. STANLEY Healthcare is a part of Stanley Black & Decker and a proud supporter of the Alzheimer’s Association®. Learn more at stanleyhealthcare.com.