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Having My Say

Centennial Park benefits from fall prevention system

by Nicole Beel

In the United States, one out of every three people over 65, more than 11 million senior citizens, fall each year.¹ According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths and the most common cause of injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.² Eighty-seven percent of all fractures for people over the age of 65 are a direct result of falling and the consequences include fractures of the hip, pelvis, spine, head and wrist.³ Furthermore, falls are the cause of death in 75 percent of incidences, in adults 65 years of age and over.⁴

Centennial Park Retirement Village is an assisted living facility located in North Platte, NE, which features also include apartments for the elderly and healthcare facilities. For those whose responsibility it is to provide a high quality and safe living environment at Centennial Park's 68 bed resident healthcare facility, fall prevention presents a significant challenge and is of chief concern.

To minimize resident falls, Centennial Park takes a multifaceted approach, in which Stanley Senior Technologies' TABS® monitoring system plays a primary role. Upon arriving at Centennial Park, a resident's medical history is closely reviewed. The purpose of reviewing each incoming resident is to aid staff in identifying the individuals whose medical history and physical ailments put them at a higher risk of falling. The screening process allows staff members to allocate fall prevention resources to those who need them most, enabling staff members to take the positive precautionary steps necessary for decreasing an individual's chances of falling.

"The possibility of falling goes beyond simply causing physical injury or harm to a resident, as it also impacts them by psychologically affecting their quality of life," explained Nicole Beel, a medical aid for Medical Resources and Supplies at Centennial Park. "As an individual ages and becomes increasingly frail, the prospect of falling becomes quite scary, causing a lot of anxiety and stress."

Beel continued: "This anxiety and fear of falling results in an individual becoming less physically active, which also has a detrimental impact on their health and quality of life. Our fall prevention program aims to serve the dual purpose of reducing falls to minimize fall-related injury and to alleviate any anxiety or fear residents may have associated with falling. Ultimately, we want to give our residents peace of mind, providing the highest quality of life as possible."

Residents who are determined to be at a high risk of falling are connected to Stanley Senior Technologies' TABS monitoring system to further ensure their safety and reduce the potential for fall related injury. The TABS monitoring solution allows the Centennial Park staff to determine the most appropriate method of monitoring, using either a pull string with

garment clip at the end, a pressure pad or both. If a resident breaks the connection of the pull string or gets up from the pressure pad, an auditory alert is sounded notifying staff of a resident's movement, allowing for a quick response. Moreover, an auditory warning for the resident, recorded in a familiar voice, such as a family member, reminds them of their limitations.

"For us, choosing to incorporate the TABS system into our fall prevention program was an easy decision," said Beel. "Not only does Stanley Senior Technologies offer excellent warranties on their products and constantly keep us up to date on new products and improvements, but the TABS system has proved itself an excellent fall management solution so much so that it has been the only fall prevention technology used in the facility for the past four years."

The TABS solution has not only been superb in curtailing falls, but is also an excellent time saving device for the staff at Centennial Park. Prior to its use of TABS, the staff would make rounds, checking those residents who were determined to be at risk of falling, every 10 minutes. Making such frequent rounds was time consuming for staff members, disruptive to their other responsibilities and the possibility remained, despite their best efforts, of a resident getting up and falling.

"Although we still check on our residents, we don't need to do so with such frequency," explained Beel. "With the TABS system, our staff is now able to focus their attention on residents and other important responsibilities with the peace of mind that residents are safe and secure." **HPN**

References:

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4. Darves, B., Strategies to Prevent Falls in High-Risk Elderly Patients, American College of Physicians (ACP), May 2003.