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K4Connect Fall Insights Report

How Technology Accelerates and Supports Resident Safety, Wellness and Satisfaction

Exploring this Insights Report

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Introduction

Technology continues to play a vital role as senior living navigates resident and staff life in the wake of the pandemic. As highlighted in the K4Connect [Summer 2021 Insights Report](#), the pandemic accelerated the need for technology to keep residents informed and connected during quarantine and lockdowns, and underscored its ability to expand staff coverage and save critical time as staffing challenges were compounded. This next review of technology usage and survey insights confirms this reliance on technology as it is increasingly integrated into daily resident life and caregiving.

This report explores themes revealed by usage data and survey response trends on how technology:

- Provides safer living environments for residents without needing to increase staffing.
- Diversifies and scales holistic wellness in a community by engaging and connecting lonely residents and increasing physical activity for less active residents.
- Keeps a closer pulse on resident satisfaction and fosters happier environments, which directly contributes to higher occupancy and resident retention.

K4Connect's Fall 2021 Insights Report, "How Technology Accelerates and Supports Resident Safety, Wellness and Satisfaction," features survey responses from over 300 residents and 40 staff members who currently use K4Community in independent living, assisted living and continuing care communities across the country. The report includes additional user data from a diverse group of over 40 senior living communities between June-September 2021. In addition, the report contains trending insights about staff, resident and resident family member usage of technology through K4Community, the premier senior living solution from K4Connect.



Key Takeaways

Resident safety remains a top priority for senior living community staff and residents. Technology increases resident visibility for staff and provides non-invasive safety tooling in resident homes that give them peace of mind while fostering independence.

- Augmenting daily safety protocols and procedures with automated technologies significantly contributes to resident safety and risk management.
- 80% of residents surveyed in communities with K4Community Resident Check-In said they felt safer and have increased peace of mind because this technology was in place.
- 73% of staff indicated the K4Community Resident Check-In solution contributed to increased safety and risk management in their community.
- 71% of staff said the solution saves staff time and 64% said it increased resident visibility.



Customer Highlight

Masonic Village at Elizabethtown, a large CCRC in Pennsylvania, confirms the well-being of over 970 residents in around 30 minutes per day using the K4Community Resident Check-In solution. On average, 99% of residents are checked in automatically leaving staff with a significantly more manageable list of manual resident checks to perform.

Falls are a concern for residents and staff alike.

Several recent studies have shown an increase in seniors' fear of falling following a period of decreased physical activity over the pandemic.

- 59% of residents were somewhat to very concerned about falling, particularly during the night at 190% more of a concern than during the day.
- The top 3 ways residents report they prevent fall accidents are exercise, followed by smart lighting that can automatically illuminate dark pathways and physical therapy.
- 86% of staff said fall prevention was extremely important in their community and 83% said their community currently has fall prevention training or resources for residents.
- Approximately 1/3 of residents indicated they were “somewhat willing” to have fall detection devices installed in their apartment to alert staff if they fall and need assistance. Close to 25% of residents surveyed indicated they were “not willing at all.”

Senior living communities and operators have an opportunity to better serve the holistic wellness needs of their residents through a curated technology implementation that brings more opportunities to stay active, mentally stimulated and engaged with friends and loved ones.

- 86% of residents surveyed indicated their physical activity level was somewhat to very active. However, 3X as many residents indicated their physical activity level to be “somewhat active” vs. “very active”.
- 89% of staff surveyed “strongly agreed” physical wellness is a priority in their community.

Living in a senior living community does in fact help combat loneliness and improve the mental, emotional and social health of older adults.

- 70% of residents surveyed indicated they were rarely to never lonely.
- 82% of residents said they believe living in a community reduces their level of loneliness with almost 50% saying it greatly reduces it.
- When looking at trends around times of day residents are most lonely, 92% more residents indicated feeling lonely in the evening vs. morning and mid-day.

Residents are customers of their communities, and as with any business, customer satisfaction is critical to success and longevity. Technology is a key facilitator of what residents say are contributors to their satisfaction and happiness.

- 89% of residents surveyed believe their community cares about their happiness.
- Residents indicated that having friendships and connections with others, feeling safe and a clean living environment are the top 3 contributors to their happiness in their community.
- 94% of staff agreed that high resident satisfaction contributes/leads to high occupancy rates
- The top three things the staff surveyed said that communities do to promote resident satisfaction were to meet with residents and encourage their input/feedback, ensure positive resident/staff interaction and have good activities and events for residents to enjoy together.

Increase Safety Without Increasing Staff

Resident safety remains a top priority for both senior living community staff and the residents. Technology helps communities scale and improve resources that keep residents safe while saving staff time.

While the pandemic introduced new and drastic causes for concern and opportunities to strengthen policies and safety resources, creating and maintaining safe environments for residents will always remain at the top of the list for senior living operators.

Technology offers operators a dependable and scalable avenue to improve safety measures while augmenting these workflows for community staff. Critical safety areas where technology plays a role include resident visibility, automatic alerting (well-check systems), and mitigating fall risks.

Augmenting daily safety protocols and procedures with automated technologies significantly contributes to resident safety and risk management in a senior living community. Traditionally administered by requiring a resident to perform a daily manual action such as pulling a cord or dialing a phone number, the [K4Community Resident](#)

What is K4Community Resident Check-in?



An award-winning automated resident well-check system delivered through non-invasive smart home and voice technologies.

- ✓ Augments manual staff checks
- ✓ Increases resident independence
- ✓ Creates safer environments
- ✓ Increases resident visibility

[Check-in](#) solution leverages in-home technology devices to transform and simplify this experience allowing residents to simply go about their day.

- 80% of residents surveyed in communities with K4Community Resident Check-In said they felt safer and have increased peace of mind because this solution/technology was in place.
- 89% of residents find this solution convenient to very convenient.

Resident safety remains a top priority for senior living, while staffing continues to be a considerable challenge for communities across the country. Technology that can save staff time and resources will enable communities to better navigate these challenges, while ensuring residents are cared for. K4Community Resident Check-In is helping communities accomplish this, saving teams valuable time, increasing resident visibility throughout the community and ultimately decreasing the volume of residents requiring daily checks.

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Check-In is helping communities accomplish this, saving teams valuable time, increasing resident visibility throughout the community and ultimately decreasing the volume of residents requiring daily checks.

- 73% of staff indicated that the K4Community Resident Check-In solution has contributed to increased safety and risk management in their community.
- 71% of staff said the solution saves staff time, agreeing that K4Community Resident Check-In simplifies the process for staff to perform wellness checks.
- 64% of staff said the solution increased resident visibility.
- 50% of staff indicated that this solution decreased the number of residents who need to be checked on from the prior manual processes which required residents to remember to push a button, attend a meal, make a phone call, etc.

Community teams interface with the automated check-in alerts in the digital staff tool, the [K4Community Team Hub](#). In this tool, teams have visibility into all residents' activity and alerts which are analyzed and surfaced in a daily report, enabling community teams to identify trends and take a more proactive approach to care and services.

When considering safety in a community, falls are



The Carrington at Lincolnwood in Illinois won Gold in the prestigious 2021 McKnight's Excellence in Technology awards for their use of K4Community Resident Check-In.

"The Carrington is very pleased with the implementation of our K4Connect Resident Check-in System. Our residents appreciate that the invisible technology requires no additional daily task for them to complete. Families feel peace of mind knowing we have both morning and evening check-in windows to look after their loved ones. Not only are our current residents satisfied, but from a marketing perspective the K4Connect system helps The Carrington stand out from our competitors."

Thomas Whitaker, Executive Director of The Carrington at Lincolnwood

a concern for residents and staff alike. There is a vast amount of research linking falls to a variety of factors. A decrease in or lack of physical activity and social engagement, medication side effects, and unsafe living environments all contribute to falls in the aging population. Technology solutions that can directly and indirectly support fall reduction and prevention are quickly evolving, from smart home to remote monitoring to telehealth and online exercise classes accessible on demand via smart devices.

Residents believe exercise is a key way to prevent fall accidents, followed by physical therapy and smart lighting. Home automation designed for older adults can create safer living environments by making the home more accessible while easing the responsibility of the resident to manage it. Examples of this include, using automated lighting to illuminate dark pathways at night or enabling the resident to control lighting and temperature through a mobile app or Amazon Alexa voice without needing to physically walk to a light switch or thermostat. Technology also provides more ways for residents to stay engaged in their physical health by bringing fitness content directly into the home and into the hands of residents no matter where they are.

- 59% of residents surveyed were somewhat to very concerned about falling, particularly during the night at 190% more of a concern than during the day. The second highest level of concern was during the evening.
- Residents were asked about their willingness to have detection devices installed in their apartment that could alert staff if they fall and need assistance. Approximately 1/3 of residents indicated they were

“somewhat willing” while close to 25% of residents surveyed indicated they were “not willing at all”.

- 86% of staff said fall prevention was extremely important in their community while 83% said their community currently has fall prevention training or resources for residents.

Several recent studies link fall prevention to physical, social and emotional wellness and have shown an increase in seniors’ fear of falling following a period of decreased physical activity over the pandemic. In August 2021, the University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging released the results of their study, [Physical Functioning and Falls During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

Researchers found that 37% of respondents reported reduced physical activity levels, 37% reported lack of companionship and 46% reported social isolation. The relationships between the factors were analyzed and showed that decreased physical activity and social isolation were linked to worsened physical conditioning, mobility, and an increased fear of falling. The poll findings point to the importance of interventions such as exercise and in-home safety modifications to improve physical functioning and reduce fall risk for older adults.

HOW RESIDENTS PREVENT FALL ACCIDENTS



Fitness & Exercise



Physical Therapy



Smart Lighting

Use of technology helps isolated older adults stay connected to others, create new relationships, and provides more ways for residents to stay engaged in their physical health by surfacing curated fitness content, information and resources through a mobile application loaded with curated physical fitness content from partners like [Spiro100](#).

“Many exercise routines were disrupted during the pandemic, so I’m encouraged residents overwhelmingly responded that they avoid falls by strength training and exercise. It means fitness is returning to pre-pandemic levels – and perhaps even higher,” said Spiro100 CEO, Mark Scher.

“We’ve noticed communities now have a better understanding of the important role intentional exercise can play in reducing the fall risk of their residents. It is so much easier (and more cost effective) to prevent falls than to manage them after the fact, both for residents and communities alike. Falls cost our country over \$50 billion each year and Spiro100 is proud to be an effective, fun, and affordable preventative solution to this problem.”

Additional research on the link between physical fitness and fall prevention from Spiro100 is [outlined in this whitepaper](#).

Expanding Community Wellness Programming

Senior living communities and operators have an opportunity to better serve the holistic wellness needs of their residents through a curated technology approach that brings more opportunities to stay active, mentally stimulated and engaged with friends and loved ones.

The definition of wellness in senior living is justly broad as we look to best serve the needs of older adults today. Mental, social and physical wellbeing have risen in importance, particularly when looking at the last year. New research shows that older adults are [pursuing the improvement of their health](#) following the pandemic. They are connecting with their doctors, seeking physical and occupational therapy when recommended and taking advantage of online exercise classes. Residents are aware of the importance of maintaining physical activity and as mentioned above, largely equate exercise to their ability to avoid falls and serious accidents.

- 86% of residents surveyed indicated their physical activity level to be somewhat to very active. However, 3 times as many residents indicated their physical activity level to be “somewhat active” vs. “very active”.
- 89% of staff surveyed “strongly agreed” that physical wellness is a priority in their community. In fact, physical wellness was the most highly prioritized type of wellness - close to 30% higher than spiritual wellness, 16% higher than social wellness and 11% higher than emotional wellness.

Common barriers to getting residents involved in activities are examined in Mather Institute’s research report, [“Stumbling Blocks: Identifying and Overcoming Older Adults’ Barrier to Physical Activity”](#). The report gives several practical recommendations to help identify and overcome these barriers. It examines belief and preference barriers such as low awareness of available programs and classes and a lack of knowledge about safe options. The report also highlights physical barriers like risk of injury plus mobility limitations and psychosocial barriers such as low self-efficacy (confidence in one’s ability) for exercise and lack of social interaction.

With the knowledge that physical activity plays a large role in fall prevention and overall

resident well being, communities should consider ways to continue to expand opportunities and encourage residents to increase their level of physical activity. Offering group activities, virtual programming via technology partners, promoting exercise as a way to prevent or manage chronic conditions or physical limitations, and encouraging residents to reflect on the positive experiences of physical activity all help increase future participation.

Battling loneliness was a concern long before the pandemic. In 2017, the Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy declared loneliness an “epidemic” pandemic. In 2017, the Surgeon General among Americans of all ages. Older adults are more susceptible to loneliness; 43% of Americans over 60 identify as lonely. Moreover, [prospective residents](#) desire to live in a connected and engaging community. A survey conducted by the International Council on Active Aging examined what people are looking for in a senior living community; 57% of respondents said they are looking to build social connections and 51% are looking for a community that offers a meaningful and engaging lifestyle.

Based on our survey, living in a senior living community helps to combat loneliness and improve the mental, emotional and social health of older adults.

- 70% of residents surveyed indicated they were rarely to never lonely.
- 82% said they believe living in a community reduces their level of loneliness with almost 50% saying it greatly reduces it.
- When asked if they were more lonely during specific times of day (morning, mid-day, evening, night

time), about one in four residents responded feeling more lonely in the evening. 92% more residents indicated feeling lonely in the evening vs. morning and mid-day.

Communities should consider ways to reduce evening loneliness. As on-site staff teams are typically smaller during the evening, teams can leverage technology to assist in filling the holes of evening activities and opportunities for residents to get together. Opportunities could include additional programming post dinner utilizing volunteers or resident run activities/clubs, using an in-house TV channel with specific programs for residents to engage with or adding content to your resident app/portal in the evening.

Understanding and Increasing Resident Satisfaction

Residents are customers of their communities and as with any business, customer satisfaction is critical to a success and longevity.

While many businesses refer to NPS scores, loyalty surveys and in-product feedback to

HOW RESIDENTS MEASURE THEIR HAPPINESS	HOW COMMUNITIES CONTRIBUTE TO RESIDENT HAPPINESS
#1 Having friendships and connection with others	#1 Meet with residents and encourage their feedback
#2 Feeling safe and secure in their community	#2 Good activities and events for residents to enjoy together
#3 Having a clean living environment	#3 Ensure positive resident/staff interaction

determine customer satisfaction, K4Connect was curious about how residents view measuring their happiness in a community. What are the key components in keeping a resident happy and satisfied? How can a community better measure that happiness to continue to deliver great experiences?

Survey results from residents of varying care settings in communities all over the country revealed that 89% of residents believe their communities care about their happiness and 86% of staff surveyed indicated that resident satisfaction/happiness is “extremely important” in their community. While residents and staff are clearly aligned on the importance of happiness, responses differed about what the core contributors to resident happiness are and how community staff contributes to their joy (see graphic on page nine).

Exploring the resident and staff feedback further, we can identify opportunities to closer align on how communities can better achieve resident happiness. Additional contributors to resident happiness included caring staff, having engaging events and activities, quality of food/dining experience and being involved in the community (active involvement in clubs, on resident council/boards, etc.). Of these responses, 86% more residents indicated “having friendships and connection with others” as a stronger contributor to happiness than the option of “being involved in my community,” while staff registered resident friendships and connections lower on the list of priorities. Communities must focus on fostering connections and relationships as a key element of delivering a healthy living environment for residents. Communities reported a [significant increase](#) in activity and event offerings from community staff earlier this year as the pandemic restrictions began to lift; now the objective to truly engage residents lies within how communities help them to better build

connections and relationships with one another. Resident happiness is also a critical element of resident retention and maintaining high occupancy rates. One of the findings in the [2019 J.D. Power U.S. Senior Living Satisfaction Study](#) was “delivering satisfying resident experiences is essential to referrals and retention.” Higher overall resident satisfaction scores directly correlated with increased referrals and reduced resident turnover. Among those residents whose overall satisfaction with the community was 900 or higher (on a 1,000-point scale), 91% said they “definitely will” stay in the community and 90% would recommend the community to friends and family.



The K4Connect survey also polled communities on how staff gather resident feedback, the frequency and method of resident surveys varied across the community respondents.

- 43% use an annual survey to gauge resident satisfaction in their community while 66% utilize ongoing surveys throughout the year.
- More communities still use paper surveys (49%) vs. online surveys (17%) or phone calls (34%)

There are opportunities to increase the frequency of surveys to keep a more consistent pulse on resident satisfaction, spend less time to complete, and be more cost effective by utilizing available free online survey tools, and an integration with resident app technology. Explore this topic further in a piece [by K4Advisors Managing Partner Dr. Cindy Phillips.](#)

Conclusion

Resident safety, wellness and satisfaction will always be important to senior living community leadership and caregivers. However, it is undeniable that excellence in these areas is especially critical today as current and prospective resident expectations have materially changed after emerging from the pandemic.

Largely out of a need to stay connected and informed during quarantine, those residents who turned to technology as a solution have now integrated those devices and tools into their daily lives. The community teams who relied on digital communications and virtual events to keep residents and their families informed and engaged now have new workflows that save them time and resources -- not just in a crisis scenario, but every single day.

We're clearly seeing technology usage trends driven by the pandemic sustain and expand as communities return to normal life and operations. Senior living operators must consider technology as an essential investment to better support community teams and provide the best in hospitality and care for their residents. Visit www.K4Connect.com to explore how K4Community is helping over 800 communities and thousands of residents and staff across the nation achieve this today.

Methodology

This report is based on proprietary usage data from over 40 senior living community resident and staff users of K4Community, our resident and staff solution for senior living. The report also includes survey responses from over 300 residents and 40 staff members who are current K4Community users. All data, unless otherwise cited, was collected and analyzed by K4Connect's in-house team of product and marketing professionals utilizing Domo, a modern BI platform and Pendo, a provider of analytic and survey tools.

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