2021

Senior Housing Design & Construction TRENDS

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It's no surprise the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly shifted the trajectory of senior housing design and construction. While the fundamentals driving change in Senior Living – economics, demographics, technology and consumerism – are staying the same, we are seeing a need for improving healthcare and building healthy communities.

In 2021, we predict senior housing design will promote the feeling of home, feature wellness-inspired trends and include a continued focus on cleanability and durability. Inside, discover the latest trends and tips for incorporating them into your buildings.

Our Senior Living Design & Construction EXPERTS

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TREND 1:
Concierge-Style Living

During a health crisis, a divide-and-conquer strategy for population health management can be an effective approach. In 2021, we recommend developing multiple, smaller ecosystems throughout your community. Each ecosystem would include enhanced amenities to support them, like a smaller satellite dining and lounge space, or a room for virtual visits, telehealth and private fitness.

These spaces would also include tenets of biophilic design by adding access to the outdoors and natural light. Other considerations include zoned mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) as well as technology systems.

This strategy helps build adaptability into your community and allow resident socialization while being able to easily separate or convert spaces during a crisis.

We are also looking at ways to enhance units in situations where residents are confined to their apartments. This includes thoughtful layouts, access to the outdoors and a particular focus on air cleaning systems. Residential amenities, like vestibules, enhanced in-unit dining and balconies, can help with infection prevention and boost marketability.

To support a concierge Senior Living model, communities will need adequate Wi-Fi and innovative Senior Living technology solutions to help residents connect with families and healthcare providers. Ample bandwidth, intentional network partitions and complete Wi-Fi coverage areas have gone from a nice-to-have to a need-to-have requirement for network infrastructure.

TREND 2:

Flexibility

In unpredictable situations, flexible design and programming can help your community adapt to whatever the day has in store. In 2021, we expect to see a greater demand for flexibility. Even in crises, residents and their family members want to see programming and amenity choices. Designing multiple multipurpose spaces can help you provide those options.

For example, consider your dining program. In normal times, many communities offer an array of amenities, like a chapel, theater and library, to promote resident choice and independence.

During an emergency, however, these amenities, or any flexible space in your community, can serve as a dining room. These adaptable spaces allow resident socialization while being able to easily separate or convert spaces in a crisis. In new construction projects, intentionally designing amenity spaces that can be used as additional dining spaces can help you adapt to unforeseen situations.

TREND 3:
Building Systems

The COVID-19 pandemic brought an urgency to create more healthy environments. This desire for healthy buildings will be one of the lasting changes after the coronavirus pandemic is over. In 2021, we'll continue to see two key Senior Living trends around building systems, including:

HVAC and Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization

New Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization (NPBI™) technology has been shown to inactivate 99.4% of the virus that causes COVID-19 in just 30 minutes in lab tests.[1] This technology can be added to existing HVAC systems with no filters that would put extra strain on your system.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Enhanced cleaning protocols and disinfectant sprays eliminate pathogens, but these measures only last until new pathogens are introduced.

Investing in better systems and improving cleaning practices can help provide residents, staff and guests with a cleaner, healthier environment that doesn't feel clinical.

TREND 4:

Infection Prevention

In 2021, there will be a continued focus on infection prevention. Infection prevention protocols start with the entry experience for all staff and guests.

Staff Entry

As your community's front line, your staff's wellness significantly impacts your community's wellness. Consider where your staff currently enters the building. If their entrance leads into a shared resident space, you may want to reconsider your staff entry sequence to help with infection prevention.

Creating a separate entry for staff and deliveries can allow employees to clean up before and after their shifts. ***Key design objectives in these separate staff vestibules include:***

Controlled and Touchless Entry
To ensure safety, the staff and deliveries entry will need touchless access control and security systems. There is an array of touchless technologies that can be used in this space. For example, consider technology that allows you to wave your hand in front of a sensor to open the door.

Health Screening Technology
Housing thermal temperature scanners[2] and other health screening technology in the vestibule will help ensure staff members are healthy before they interact with residents. The vestibule would also be an ideal spot for the time clock.

TREND 4: Infection Prevention

Delivery Lockers

Adding delivery lockers, including refrigerated options, near the entry allows staff to place orders for deliveries or have community-provided food and groceries left for them. Including a touchless intercom system can alert staff to deliveries.

These design elements can help keep staff separated from residents until they have been screened and are ready for their shift.

Staff Lockers and Showers

After the entry and vestibule, we recommend adding staff lockers and showers. These amenities not only help boost staff retention, but they are also key in an infection prevention protocol. Housing the lockers and showers in the separate staff area allows staff to decontaminate and prepare for a shift. During a health crisis, this would be an excellent spot to distribute PPE.

Key design elements in the locker room include:

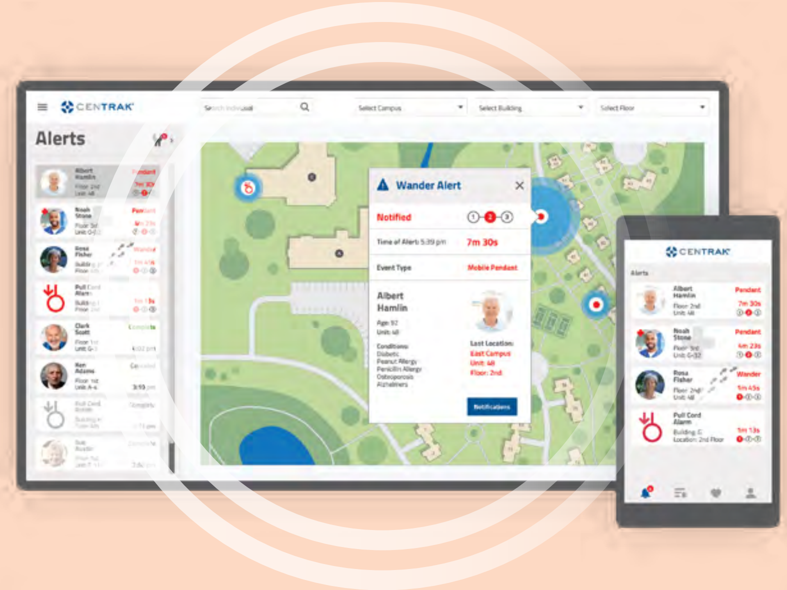
- An entry in the locker room from the staff vestibule
- Individual staff storage lockers to keep personal belongings
- A uniform laundering area to ensure fresh uniforms are readily available
- Showers and restrooms
- A separate exit into the resident corridor

Front Entry

In front entries, rethinking vestibules can help in the event of a health crisis. Today, vestibules are typically smaller areas that are largely insignificant. Activating the vestibule to include a concierge desk and thermal temperature scanners could make a difference during a health crisis.

Technology Spotlight: Real-Time Location Systems

One way to increase visibility in your Senior Living community is by incorporating a real-time location system (RTLS), like the new CenTrak® TruView™ RTLS solution. TruView offers an automated way to track and document key metrics – all in an elegant design that's highly impactful for Senior Living operators and easy for staff to use.



CenTrak Dashboard

During the pandemic, or any time there's risk of infection or illness transmission, real-time location systems can provide an array of services to help providers manage the spread of the coronavirus and other infectious diseases:

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Technology Spotlight: Real-Time Location Systems

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Contact Tracing

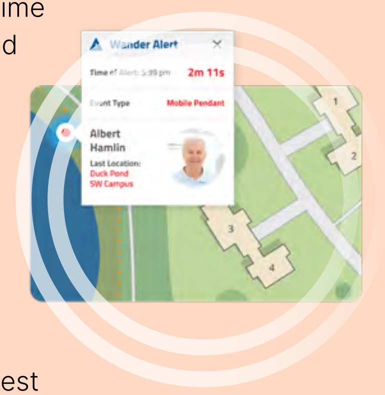
Gain historical insight into the locations, duration and interactions between residents, staff and visitors through simple contact tracing reports. This detailed information can help providers identify individuals who had close contact with infected persons for proper communication and response. It can also limit cleaning and disinfection to impacted areas rather than costly building-wide treatments.

Asset Tracking

TruView can also help staff identify where vital equipment is located throughout a community. This helps staff work in the safest manner possible because they are able to track used equipment that needs to be disinfected before its next use.

GeoLocation

With TruView's GeoFencing technology, providers can create a safer campus-wide environment through the creation of safe zones and off-limit areas. Staff members get real-time alerts when a quarantined individual – or other at-risk individuals based on care needs – leaves a designated wing or location, allowing them to respond quickly.



Wander Alert

Time of Alert: 2m 11s

Event Type: Mobile Pendant

Albert Hamlin

Last Location: Duck Pond SW Campus

Learn more about the latest Senior Living technology at **directsupply.com/tech**.

An additional trend emerging during COVID-19 is adding a visitation room adjacent to the lobby. Not only is it convenient for visiting family members, but it will also help prevent potentially infected visitors from entering into resident spaces.

To help staff maintain the visitation space and ensure proper cleaning between each use, consider materials with enhanced cleanability features and solid, nonporous surfaces.

TREND 5:
Circulation

To help promote social distancing in senior community housing, we recommend creating flexible amenities while still providing beautiful spaces. For example, in dining rooms, we can add dividers that help create intimacy and safety while still offering residents a desirable experience.

There is an array of dividers to choose from, including decorative and mobile full-height panels that divide tables and clear, acrylic tabletop dividers that provide protection to residents sharing a table.

In addition to separating groups, it's important to control the flow of people. If a current dining room has a pre-function space, residents could enter through there, enjoy their meals and exit through a second door to help reduce interactions. This one-way flow helps minimize the risk of disease transmission.

Technology in Senior Living facilities can help support social distancing measures as well. Some artificial intelligence software can detect who is wearing a mask or count the number of people in a room and send alerts to staff as needed.

Adapted Programming

We're also seeing providers implement staggered mealtimes and activities to support social distancing practices and allow staff to thoroughly disinfect the space between each seating. Resident surveys can help provide insights on how comfortable residents are with congregate dining and other gatherings. Some providers may want to introduce reservation-based service in their dining programs. This allows residents to reserve a table or order a meal online before picking it up at the bistro.

TREND 5: Circulation

Social distancing in an existing dining room can create a space that looks and feels empty. Many operators are finding creative ways to fill the extra chairs, like adding stuffed animals. Some organizations have partnered with local historical societies to fill the seats with historically dressed mannequins. Not only does it help fill the space, but it also helps generate conversation.

Converting a patio into an extra dining area is a great way to take advantage of outdoor space and natural air circulation. Adding outdoor kitchens, including a grill, cooler and mobile bar, can offer a unique dining experience and reduce the number of trips to the kitchen for staff.

Put It into Practice: Visitation Spaces

Not only are visitation spaces ideal for infection prevention, they also provide a private environment for intimate gatherings, which can be difficult to find in congregate care.

Partitioning off an existing activity or dining room can be a cost-effective way to create a more intimate space. ***There are an array of materials that make excellent dividers:***

- Decorative screens can elevate a space while providing needed separation. A mobile whiteboard easel can be effective in an activity area, as it can serve double duty.
- Antimicrobial drapery hung with the appropriate hardware is a classy, cost-effective way of dividing a space. For example, using drapery to section off a smaller private dining space within a large dining room can provide an elegant solution.
- Commonly used in resident rooms, privacy curtains can be a practical choice for partitioning space.
- Inspired by modern offices, 8×8 freestanding cubicle rooms could be added to larger areas.

No matter how you divide the space, it’s important to make sure there are proper turning radiuses for wheelchairs. These spaces should still be large enough to accommodate social distancing as well.

TREND 6:

Touch

This trend is two-fold: providing a white-glove experience for residents to limit their touch and enhanced materiality for infection prevention.

Using technology to automatically open doors, providing meals in a resident room and employing innovative wayfinding solutions can all help reduce the need to touch potentially contaminated surfaces.

For surfaces that residents need to touch, consider materials with enhanced cleanability features, like antimicrobial fabrics and solid, nonporous surfaces. These can help make it easier for staff to keep the community clean.

Materials may include:

- Antimicrobial fabrics, which offer protection against bacteria, mold, mildew and other microbes.
- Silvertex™ fabrics, which are treated with silver ion technology to provide a germ-fighting defense to help safeguard against odor and bacteria.
- Seamless thermolaminate, which is constructed in one piece to help prevent bacteria from growing in cracks.
- Faux-wood metal, a durable material that can be easily cleaned with a diluted bleach solution.

TREND 7:
Wellness

Access to the outdoors, ample natural light and integrating organic elements help support innate feelings of wellness. Through strategic Senior Living interior design choices, we can help boost connectivity to the natural environment to benefit the health of everyone in your building.

In addition to designing healthy buildings, we recommend wellness programming for the mind, body and spirit. This programming can be accomplished in a multipurpose space or brought to each resident room.

The use of telehealth will remain popular after the COVID-19 pandemic is over as well. Communities will need adequate Wi-Fi to help facilitate telehealth as well as private space for appointments to prevent disclosure of protected health information (PHI).

Technology Spotlight:
Wi-Fi

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the likelihood of social isolation in Senior Living communities. This challenge is worrisome for providers, as living with loneliness can increase the odds of dying early by up to 45%.[3]

Now more than ever, Senior Living residents are relying on personal electronics and video streaming to connect with family and friends. To help support this tech for seniors, communities need to have a robust network and Wi-Fi connectivity.

Ample bandwidth, intentional network partitions and complete Wi-Fi coverage areas have gone from a nice-to-have to a need-to-have requirement for network infrastructure.

Learn how Direct Supply can help you improve your Wi-Fi network at **directsupply.com/tech**.

TREND 7: Wellness

Put It into Practice

Staff Lounges & Amenities
As your community's front line, the health of your senior home caregivers affects the health of your residents. Enhanced amenities that promote wellness, like a relaxing lounge, give staff a space to rest and recharge before returning to work. These amenities can help you attract and retain employees as well.

Key design elements in an enhanced staff lounge include:

Kitchenette
Providing staff with an in-house kitchen allows them to grab a snack or beverage when needed. Plus, it can help with efficiency because they won't need to leave your building for a meal.

Private Space
Offer a quiet respite from the hustle and bustle of your community. These spots are great for computer access and private phone conversations.

Fitness Room
A dedicated staff fitness room can help boost employee well-being and mental health. By offering a small selection of workout equipment, you can help your staff reduce stress.

Natural Light
Taking cues from biophilic design, which promotes connectivity to the natural environment, flooding staff spaces with natural light can help boost morale.

Access to Outdoor Space
Similarly, we recommend offering dedicated outdoor space for staff to enjoy during their breaks.

TREND 8:

Colors

This year's popular colors support the holistic wellness design trend by paying homage to nature and promoting a feeling of home within the community. As evidenced by the Pantone colors of the year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating, we're seeing the balanced nature of warm and cool tones take a renewed focus, whereas we previously saw periods of heavy cool and then heavy warm influence. This year's colors share the spotlight and reinforce the need for balance in design.

Denim, linen and leather are becoming more popular in Senior Living communities for their nod to natural environments and timeless elegance. Other nature-inspired hues, like blues and greens, provide the perfect complement. Warmer shades, cotton textures and cozy fabrics all provide a layer of comfort that supports a homelike environment.

For example, we're seeing bold colors used to spice up a multipurpose room or punchy draperies in a dining room. Unexpected elements can create a sense of light and excitement in the space.

Playful Accents

While furnishings and fabrics are trending more natural and warm, wallcoverings, draperies and other accents have more freedom to be whimsical. Not only does an out-of-the-box color or pattern add interest to the space, but it can help create an exciting environment that distracts residents from current events.

Start implementing these trends in your buildings today.
Schedule a free consulation at **aptura.net/contact** or call **1-844-4APTURA**.

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[1] *Inactivation results based on sensitivity testing conducted by independent third-party testing laboratory using control chambers. Multiple data points are used to formulate performance validation statements. The technology is used in a wide range of applications across diverse environmental conditions. Results in non-lab environments will vary; clients should evaluate their individual application and environmental conditions when making an assessment regarding the technology's potential benefits. For all independent laboratory results, contact Direct Supply at **IndoorAirQuality@Directs.com**. The use of this technology is not intended to take the place of reasonable precautions to prevent the transmission of pathogens (including COVID-19). Comply with all applicable public health laws and guidelines as well as CDC guidance (**https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html**).

[2] This is not a medical device. Statements regarding this temperature device have not been evaluated by the FDA. This temperature device should not be solely or primarily relied upon to diagnose or exclude a diagnosis of COVID-19, or any other disease or health condition. Elevated body temperature in the context of use should be confirmed with secondary evaluation methods.

[3] Symonds, S., (2020, October 01). How tech is reducing social isolation in senior living in the COVID-19 era. Retrieved from **https://www.mcknightsseniorliving.com/home/columns/marketplace-columns/how-tech-is-reducing-social-isolation-in-senior-living-in-the-covid-19-era/**

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