

PRESS RELEASES

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New Study Shows 9 in 10 Americans Link Cleanliness with Level of Care Provided in Senior Living Communities

Other findings indicate growing expectations for hotel-like amenities, such as fresh, convenient food items, comfort and ambiance

PHOENIX--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- New public opinion survey results announced today in conjunction with the start of the Assisted Living Federation of America's (ALFA) 2014 Conference & Exposition reveal that those selecting a senior living community for themselves or a loved one place a high priority on cleanliness, healthy and convenient food options, and hotel-like amenities.

With an estimated 70 percent of people who reach age 65 needing some form of long-term service and support¹, Ecolab Inc. recently commissioned a survey of 400 Americans involved in selecting senior living communities to determine how these decisions are made, the factors that influence these decisions, and the expectations for services and amenities offered by senior living communities.

"Choosing a community for a loved one is highly emotional. In fact, more than half of the respondents reported that this was one of the most emotional decisions they've ever made," said Leah Larson, director of Long Term Care Marketing for Ecolab's Institutional business. "And, with 10,000 people turning 65 years old today, and every day until the year 2029, exponentially more people will make these important decisions each day."

First Impressions Count: 93 Percent Say Cleanliness Linked to Quality of Care

When asked whether they agreed that "If a community isn't clean, it suggests to me that the staff might not take good care of the residents," 93 percent agreed. Moreover, 96 percent ranked "cleanliness" as important or extremely important when choosing a senior living community; women are twice as likely as men to say cleanliness is their top priority.

"This research confirmed what we intuitively know to be true. First impressions count, especially when it comes to cleanliness," said Larson. "Ecolab's field sales-and-service teams and research and development experts work inside customer locations, alongside housekeeping, laundry and foodservice staffs, to learn about and develop solutions for the unique cleaning and sanitizing challenges in senior living communities."

Larson added that cleaning a resident's room is similar in process to cleaning a hotel room, but more challenging in that special consideration must be given to the presence of residents and their personal belongings. In addition, a focus on infection prevention is of higher importance due to potentially compromised immune systems.

Concerning laundry, Larson added that resident skin sensitivity may be an issue, so it's important to have the right laundry solution to help reduce the occurrences of bed sores. Finally, she said overall cleanliness has a direct correlation to both the perception of care and the actual delivery of a positive resident experience.

"This depth of knowledge allows us to personally train staffs across several areas of the facility about: 1) housekeeping protocols and products that efficiently and effectively clean and disinfect rooms; 2) laundry wash processes and chemistry that help keep linens clean, while helping to reduce skin irritations for residents and the cost of linen replacement for management; and 3) food safety and kitchen cleaning and sanitizing procedures and products to help reduce the risk of foodborne illness, while achieving commercial kitchen sanitation levels and spotless tableware for residents and guests."

High Expectations for Healthy, Convenient Foods: 71 Percent Want Room Service

The survey also showed that senior living communities today are expected to offer fresh, healthy foods along with convenience. In fact, 85 percent of respondents ranked quality and variety of food as important. They also had high expectations for specific food and dining options in senior living communities, reminiscent of what might be found in a hotel. For instance, 71 percent want room service, 66 percent expect a coffee shop, 78 percent expect a bakery or fresh baked goods and desserts, and 82 percent expect a fresh salad bar. About 20 percent expect access to an on-site bar or pub.

Hillcrest Health Services, near Omaha, Neb., an organization serving aging adults that utilizes Ecolab products and solutions in their foodservice, housekeeping and laundry operations, is an example of how these hotel-like foodservice expectations are being brought to life.

"Our 'Culinary Vision', which includes in-room dining services, multiple dining room options and an eat-in bistro with made-to-order specialties, centers around the concept of providing patients and residents choices about when, where and what they can eat while they are staying with us," said Tim Irwin, Hillcrest's vice president of Operations. "In the near future, we'll again offer a bistro and resort-style dining - as well as an on-site pub - at our new Grand Lodge."

Bring on the "Extras"

When asked to rank a list of features in order of priority when considering an independent or assisted living community, answers varied depending upon whether the respondents were making the decision for themselves or a loved one.

For those making decisions as the resident, comfort and ambiance of their living space ranked number one, followed by services and amenities and safe layout. If making the decision for someone else, a caring staff ranked at the top of the list.

Regardless of the role of the respondent, when asked about the importance of several services and amenities, many said frequency of cleaning/laundry services (82 percent)

is a priority, as is in-house exercise and recreational activities (72 percent) and access to in-room WIFI (43 percent).

"This research indicates that one size does not fit all when it comes to selecting a senior living community, and different decision makers have different priorities," said Larson.

"What does all this mean? First, for our company, we need to continue innovating products and educating our customers around maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness - as it is one of the most important factors in selecting a senior living community. Second, our customers should continue to invest in creating vibrant senior living communities that deliver on the higher expectations of this generation. And finally, the long-term care industry needs to find ways to differentiate independent and assisted living from nursing care, and increase awareness about the opportunity to maintain a vibrant lifestyle as the need for senior living communities skyrockets in the near future."

To learn more about Ecolab's custom solutions in the long term care industry, as well as other key market segments such as foodservice, lodging and facility care, visit www.ecolab.com.

About Ecolab

A trusted partner at more than one million customer locations, Ecolab (ECL) is the global leader in water, hygiene and energy technologies and services that protect people and vital resources. With 2013 sales of \$13 billion and 45,000 associates, Ecolab delivers comprehensive solutions and on-site service to promote safe food, maintain clean environments, optimize water and energy use and improve operational efficiencies for customers in the food, healthcare, energy, hospitality and industrial markets in more than 170 countries around the world. For more Ecolab news and information, visit www.ecolab.com.

About Hillcrest Health Services

Hillcrest Health Services offers the region's largest continuum of health services for aging adults, including independent and assisted living, in-patient and outpatient rehabilitation, long-term care, memory support, adult day services, certified skilled home health and private duty home care, palliative care, telehealth services, and hospice care. Hillcrest currently serves nearly 1,000 aging adults daily across eight counties in Nebraska and Iowa. For more information, visit www.hillcresthealth.com or call (402) 682-4800.

¹ 2014 Medicare & You, National Medicare Handbook, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, September 2013.

(ECL-P)

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