

# 5 supply chain lessons from long-term care

Insights from Extended Care at HIDA's 2012 Streamlining Healthcare Conference

Healthcare continues to present new supply chain challenges and opportunities. At the 2012 Health Industry Distributors Association Streamlining Healthcare Conference in Chicago, distributors, manufacturers, and providers discussed how these issues influence their business. Here are just a few post-acute observations from the event.



**1 Post-acute care is more acute than you think.** “Skilled nursing providers are focusing on advanced services—like cardiac and IV care—normally seen in hospitals. Even assisted living communities are adopting ‘traditional’ nursing services as residents delay or attempt to avoid post-acute care transitions altogether. Health systems can seize a huge opportunity by expanding long-term care services with products typically used by hospitals.”

—Mark Steele, President, Gulf South Medical Supply

**2 Nurses need to focus on nursing, not logistics.** “Traveling clinicians often put product into their car’s trunk stock and pull out as needed for homecare patients. This is not an ideal environment for supplies, nor a good use of nurses’ time. By partnering with a distributor to serve as manager of delivery logistics, products can be delivered directly to the point of care and are ready to use when our clinicians arrive. This reduces our administrative costs and allows clinicians to visit more patients to do what they do best: provide quality care.”

—Patrick Ramsey, Director, Performance Improvement, Trinity Home Health Services

**3 The future of care is person-centered.** “Patient satisfaction is crucial for improving care.

High-quality tissues, stainless steel soap dispensers, and upgraded gloves may not be the norm in most facilities but can make all the difference for a patient’s comfort and health. There are nine quality measures that help CMS publicly rate how well a provider cares for its patients. Don’t lose sight of the fact that your residents can be your greatest asset.”

—Brian Rivera, Owner, Tampico Terrace and Dinuba Living Care

**4 Open communication is a powerful tool.** “Proper communication between supply chain partners is key for achieving healthcare goals. You may be using the best products in the market, yet without proper education from your vendor you lose that benefit. I once identified a particular skin prep product that cost 60% less than what my customer used, only to be told that it didn’t work nearly as well for their patients. Without open dialogue, I would have been none the wiser and their short-term savings would have resulted in higher infection rates.”

—Mark Hineser, Owner, ECO Sound Medical Services

**5 Smart inventory procedures produce big savings.** “Have you noticed that staff commonly push older products to the back of shelves to make room for new inventory? We did and conducted an internal supply audit to address this problem. We found \$8,000 worth of expired product at just one of our 17 sites. Moving to a just-in-time inventory system prevents future supply loss, frees up valuable storage space, and saves us time by delivering items directly to our customers.”

—Patrick Ramsey

