

SENIOR HOUSING — TRENDS

Prioritize residents' physical and mental health

The senior living industry has heroically faced unique challenges unlike any other this past year. The pandemic's impact exposed areas for improvement, forcing savvy developers to better equip communities and projects as we continue to adapt to the lasting impacts of COVID-19.

Senior living in a post-pandemic world will look different. It will be crucial that developers work closely with partners to reimagine the development journey and strike the delicate balance of enhancing building designs with holistic technologies that adhere to health and safety protocols, while maintaining a sense of home, hospitality, community, joy and wellness for residents.

■ **It's time to set a new standard.** The pandemic caused many senior living projects to experience delays in development timelines due primarily to the halt in new construction lending. This disruption made it critical for thought leaders in the industry to reassess their approach to projects in design, under construction and those already in operation. The goal was to continue providing quality senior living developments while simultaneously expanding the commitment to protecting elderly residents as well as staff. Providing safe and hospitable senior housing projects had become more pressing than ever.

The implementation of a Whole Health Standard enables developers to adopt a holistic design approach that incorporates the latest protec-



Matt Derrick
Senior development
director, Confluent
Senior Living

tions for residents' physical health while advancing features essential to mental health. To complement social and vocational wellness programming, and defend against disease, it is encouraged to consider the Whole Health Standard to evaluate cutting-edge technologies to enhance wellness and safety, while emphasizing lifestyle, hospitality and comfort. Opportunities exist for developers to enlist resources and lifestyle amenities that prioritize resident wellness through proactive, precautionary and innovative designs. The industry must integrate technologies from sanitation stations and touchless faucets and light switches, to needlepoint bipolar ionization through HVAC systems and electrostatic sprayers that neutralize infectious diseases. Additionally, community features that can be incorporated for properties include balconies and outdoor spaces such as open-air dining areas, pools, parks and community gardens to promote enjoyable outdoor activities.

The key to successfully delivering a project from the lens of COVID-19 health and safety precautions is to ensure designs remain true to the vision of delivering quality design with a hospitality-first mindset. Moving forward, developers must prioritize innovations to improve

tions for residents' physical health while advancing features essential to mental health. To complement social and vocational wellness programming, and defend against disease, it is encouraged to consider the Whole Health Standard to evaluate cutting-edge



The key to successfully delivering a project from the lens of COVID-19 health and safety precautions is to ensure designs remain true to the vision of delivering quality design with a hospitality-first mindset. Pictured above is MorningStar of Observatory Park.

their properties based on what has been learned while avoiding designs that elicit a sterile or institutional feel. Developers must ensure senior living residents, staff and guests are protected without sacrificing the quality, aesthetics and comfort of the community or the resident quality of life.

■ **Remain focused on residents.** Various health and safety recommendations have better protected us from spreading the virus, but some precautions, like sheltering in place or social distancing, have become mentally and emotionally detrimental, especially for those residing in senior living communities. With this in mind, there are certain design and community changes

that developers may consider resisting, as they have the potential to jeopardize the mental health of residents. While a pod concept may provide initial reassurance as it can help reduce the spread of disease, it also can be isolating and negatively impact the mental health of the resident. Practices such as this have the potential to ultimately eliminate the features of a community that are sought after and critical for a resident's happiness and longevity.

In considering innovations to implement in future communities, it's important to recognize when to resist the holistic design shifts that

Please see Derrick, Page 24

IGNITING SUCCESS

Cappella Living Solutions is a **management** and **consulting** resource for both for-profit and not-for-profit senior living communities.

- New development services
- Consulting - Operations-related assessments as well as sales & marketing
- Management services

Call us today **720.684.4600**
CappellaLiving.com

Cappella LIVING SOLUTIONS

PARTNERING WITH YOU TO **EXPAND** POSSIBILITIES