



## Case Study

# Menno Haven Retirement Communities

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### Client

Menno Haven Retirement Communities manages three continuing care retirement community (CCRC) campuses in southern Pennsylvania, providing senior housing and care to more than 1,200 residents. The organization employs nearly 600 senior care providers.

Menno Haven's previous training efforts included monthly in-person inservices and self-study, using online programs and courses on occasion. Tracking was done with sign-in sheets that were then entered into an electronic program.

### Challenges

*Previous Training was Inconsistent, Costly*

Denny Hartman, who has been with Menno Haven for 11 years, became Director of Staff Development in 2008. One of his first goals was to streamline a costly and piecemeal staff training program; throughout the years, Menno Haven used several training methods but course content was not standardized. "In 2002, we formed an alliance with two other communities in other towns, and one of our committees addressed mandatory training," he says. "We put together a standardized training system that would be used across communities in the alliance, but we still had challenges."

The program brought consistency to inservices but it was still costly to prepare and deliver training. "We

### CHALLENGES

- Previous training efforts were inconsistent and costly
- Training compliance needed improvement
- Training was seen as a chore

had to pay to replace employees on the floor who were in training or pay overtime to those who had to come in off-shift," Denny says. "In one year, we would spend about \$40,000 for training between arrangements and wages."

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*- Denny Hartman,  
Director of Staff Development,  
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### *Training Compliance Needed Improvement*

Once Menno Haven's training was somewhat standardized, they still struggled with employee participation. "If we hit 70% compliance, that was a good year," The low compliance rate was also a service and resident

concern: "We didn't want to continue to spend all this time on training to only get 70% participation and then risk exposure of residents (or a state surveyor) to someone in the 30% who didn't attend training."

### *Training was Seen as a Chore*

One of the contributing factors to Menno Haven's compliance issues was that employees saw training as a chore. "It was drudgery," Denny says. With his background in education and experience with different teaching methods, Denny knew that a successful training program would need to engage and empower employees.

### Results

*Training is Less Costly, More Consistent*

Menno Haven received clear motivation to move to online training in the summer of 2008: "We learned that in the state of Pennsylvania, RNs need 36 CEUs every two years to maintain licensure, beginning with re-licensure in 2010," Denny says. "When you multiply the cost of CEs by our number of nurses, that's a major additional cost." Using a system that provides free CEs would save the expense of having to adapt to the new licensure terms.

Menno Haven was also able to take advantage of a grant through WEDnetPA (Workforce and Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania) that covered

computer-based learning for employees who aren't computer efficient or who need the training to do their jobs. The grant offset their online program costs for almost all of the first year.

The cost benefits continue beyond the grant: Online training allows employees to train anytime, bringing cost savings for replacing staff in training and overtime for those who come in off-shift. Consistent coursework among the three communities and automatic compliance tracking have also helped to streamline training efforts. Menno Haven also values the component of Silverchair's system that tests for comprehension of course material. The requirement to earn at least an 80% on course post-tests provides confirmation that each student has attained a mastery of each course subject.

#### *Achieved High Compliance*

One of the greatest effects online learning has brought to Menno Haven is its higher compliance. "We're currently at 99% compliance," Denny says, "But we really want 100%!"

#### **Average Compliance**

<b>Before Silverchair</b>	<b>With Silverchair</b>
70%	99%

Denny was able to promote the system to employees to get them excited about using the system: "I used the power of promotion and anticipation," he says. "Here was a system that was new and different, and they were in control of it and could do at their convenience."

#### *Training is Now Fun, Empowering*

Another factor in Menno Haven's improved compliance is the feeling employees now have toward training. "We don't

call it 'mandatory training' anymore," says Denny. "We call it Silverchair—'Did you do your Silverchair today?'"

Denny was able to use his experience in education to turn something that was boring into something employees would embrace and enjoy doing. "This industry is very regulated, because it has to be," he says. "If you can do something to empower your employees, that's going to positively impact how they view their job ... if you can make following the rules a positive thing, all the better."

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Employees are able to own their training in several ways. For instance, one course per month is assigned with a due date in 60 days. There are designated "catch up months" where employees can finish their coursework. "This method allowed people to not feel overwhelmed," Denny says. "We know things happen; this way, they could get into a rhythm at their own pace." Employees can also test out of courses they've completed within the last year if they get 100% on the pre-test. Employees have taken so well to the system that some departments

are engaging in friendly competition to see who can complete their training the fastest or have the highest compliance.

Denny has also used Silverchair to help continue to spread Menno Haven's corporate culture of excellent service, toward residents and each other. He's authoring courses on customer service, attitude, and Menno Haven's core values. "Residents watch how we treat each other and use that behavior to judge the job we're doing," Denny says. "With the trend of person-centered care in our industry, it's important that we continue to develop awareness of our behavior and the effects of it."

#### **Conclusion**

Menno Haven used online learning to solve several issues in their training program: inconsistency, cost, compliance, and the boredom factor. Employees gained a sense of empowerment and ownership of their training and performance. Training is now an essential part of working at Menno Haven and is used to positively affect the level of care for its residents.

"Silverchair has changed the way we think about mandatory training," says Denny. "We're doing it now because we need to know this information to serve residents better—regulations are secondary."



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