Industry Expert Laurie Orlov's Insights for 2020 and Beyond

This month, VitalTech had the privilege of interviewing renowned aging expert Laurie Orlov, founder of Aging and Health Technology Watch and former industry analyst at Forrester Research. We were curious about her insights on how technology and the pandemic will disproportionately affect seniors. Her answers were nothing short of brilliant.

TAKEAWAY 1: Technology will be a baseline requirement, not a value-add
First and foremost, while technology is currently a differentiator for senior living facilities, in the near future it will be a baseline requirement. As mentioned in Senior Housing News, Grant Chamberlain of Ziegler Health Investments noted that more advancement in mid-March occurred than in the previous three years. This advancement has only accelerated exponentially as demand for technology has grown as a direct result of the COVID pandemic.

Ms. Orlov adds on to this sentiment: "I don't believe technology will be an attractor – more like lack of technology is a detractor. Safety wearables that include GPS and health monitoring systems will be required. Wearables with fall detection will also become a norm."

TAKEAWAY 2: Worker shortage crisis and efficiency
When asked, "Are senior living community operators seeking technologies to help automate routine caregiver tasks and relieve the workflow for busy caregivers?," Ms. Orlov answered in the affirmative; senior living communities are eager to find ways to help their staff members become more efficient. This is because: 1) they are seeing a shortage of workers; and 2) they want remaining workers to be more efficient and not run unnecessarily around the building. She states the importance of adopting POC solutions that enable the use of the system to decrease manual processes.

TAKEAWAY 3: Isolation, loneliness and the technology chasm
As the world grapples with issues of isolation and loneliness as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, nowhere is this felt more profoundly than among the senior community. In addition to being at increased vulnerability due to age, coupled with a higher incidence of comorbidities, seniors are also disproportionately disadvantaged due to reduced technological literacy. Seniors in 2020 are more isolated and alone than ever before.

However, this is actively being remedied. Ms. Orlov noted an accelerated adoption of technology among seniors. However, she notes with caution, "Most of the consumer offerings that we know well lack adequate security and privacy protection that will need to be addressed." She is seeing an increase of senior living residents receiving technological devices that can be used for meaningful communication with friends and family. This will only continue to increase. And once technology is adopted, it is fairly well embraced.

VitalTech is a leader in senior living health technology solutions

More of Ms. Orlov's insights will be shared in September on VitalTech's blog. To learn more about how VitalTech's suite of solutions can help senior living communities and seniors aging in place, please visit: https://www.vitaltech.com/senior-care. Thank you for your time and insights, Laurie!

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