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## **Can You Ever Be Worry Free?**

### **IT Initiative’s New Security System Makes It Possible**

“It was awful,” says Shelley Kidd, Poughkeepsie. “My mom was in a nursing home. I had to work. Even though I went to see her every single day after work, I worried all day long. I couldn’t talk to her on the telephone because she couldn’t talk or even hold the phone. How do I know that the staff was attentive to her needs? How do I know she was safe?”

John Dalton, the president and principal consultant of IT Initiatives, Freehold, a technology company that specializes in security, had made it his mission to keep people safe by integrating the latest technology into schools and houses of worship. It wasn’t until recently, however, that he realized a void existed in the security systems for senior care facilities.

Seeing some of our most vulnerable citizens at risk didn’t sit right with Dalton, so he got to work designing systems specifically for independent living, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities—systems that will do more than keep people safe. In Dalton’s world, “security” means more than alarms. It means communication—connecting with people and having access to every corner of a facility at the touch of a button with an advanced wireless device. These are systems that will also enhance the quality of life for people in adult care facilities.

For instance, the construction of the 14-acre Village for Healthcare and Rehabilitation of Workmen’s Circle facility, Freehold, begun this summer, will bring one of John Dalton’s systems, his vision of security, to life.

The Village for Healthcare and Rehabilitation of Workmen’s Circle will include all the expected security technology, of course, but it will also feature high definition video conferencing that will connect people to every resident there. Here the system goes beyond mere security. It’s about improving lives.

Dr. Marshall I. Goldberg says, “The facility’s systems will ensure a superior quality of care and security for patients, staff, and families. Electronic records are the way to go now. Everything will be on the computer, so the nurses have instant access to it. It’s also better for patient confidentiality.”

Can a “security” system improve healthcare? As The Village will prove, it sure can.

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When a resident signals a nurse, for example, every nurse and caregiver in the facility will be able to determine what resident is seeking assistance and in what room, along with other vital information.

With the touch of a button any nurse can have instant communication with the resident to assess his or her needs. The system then saves all data from the call, offering detailed records about the level of care a loved one is receiving.

“We are saving information, such as when the call originated, the resident’s information, the type of call it was, all the units that responded, what time they visited the room to reset the device, and what time the call was completed,” Dalton says. “But it’s more than recordkeeping; it’s about giving family members peace of mind.

“When a resident’s son calls up and says, ‘Nobody responded to my mother. It took five hours for someone to go to her room,’ we can say it really took two minutes from the time she pulled the cord to the time the call was completed for her to have her glass of water. That is a very high tech application.”

Residents will even be able to connect with their children on a regular basis via the integrated technologies Dalton plans for The Village.

It may sound futuristic, but the truth is, the technology is common, easy to access, and surprisingly affordable. “This isn’t something that will set you back millions of dollars,” Dalton explains. “These systems utilize technology that is already in regular use today.”

Because Dalton designs these systems from the ground up, it’s easy to create a network that is expansion-friendly. For instance, a continuing care retirement community in West Caldwell will have the infrastructure put in place from the very start to accommodate the high-tech phone system described above, even though it may not be put into service immediately.

Other senior care facilities, such as Green Hill in West Orange, will feature other unique ways to utilize this technology. In addition to the monitoring systems described above, a “wander management” system will help alert staff when clients put themselves in danger.

Surveillance cameras will do more than look for people trying to break in; they will be watching for at-risk residents trying to get out. When a client approaches the doors in a dementia unit or “neighborhood,” the system will put up a red flag and alert staff before the worst happens. The system will even allow images from anywhere in the facility to be streamed directly to a

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nurse's phone. That translates to faster response times and safer situations for loved ones.

Maybe even more fascinating than the technology itself is how seamlessly Dalton can integrate it in a facility. In some of his projects, the latest technology blends easily into classic architecture. "The St. Denis Project in Manasquan is a renovated Catholic house of worship. There we have advanced audio and HD visual, an access control system, custom locking system and more; but it will be so seamlessly integrated into the building that you won't realize it's there when it's not in use," Dalton says. "Even better, we'll have an HD video recording system that will allow Baptisms, Confirmations, and Communion to be recorded without the need for additional cables and cameras all over the place."

Amid all this, it might be easy to forget that these are security systems, too. But Dalton doesn't forget. Making security the best it can be, after all, is a big part of his expertise. "When we talk about security, we are not talking about the old school burglar alarm system – you open a door, an intruder comes in, the alarm goes off," Dalton says. "Our goal is to prevent the intrusion from ever occurring, using access control and video surveillance."

The systems handle traditional monitoring, of course, but also allow a facility to track who is coming and going with video monitoring, card-swipe systems that help track the movement of employees and limit public access to certain areas of a building or campus, and create a digital record of events at the location.

Dr. Goldberg says, "The security and computer systems are being custom designed from the ground up at the Village for Healthcare and Rehabilitation. Everything is being designed by IT Initiatives. It's completely state of the art. Everything is connected, from our call center to the nurses' care stations."

Dalton's expertise comes not just through experience, but through experience that has been praised by client after client. It's simple: His system designs are in high demand because they work and they offer peace of mind.

"I use IT Initiatives because they can look at the whole project and expand the scope so that it addresses a lot of problems you wouldn't realize you had unless you had that technical background," said, Toni Davis, President of Green Hill senior living campus in, West Orange, N.J. "They've been a huge help in combining resident monitoring, communications, and security."