

# OPENING THE GATES TO

*Two companies demonstrate their electronic projects in an interactive*

## ALEXIS STARKEY

**T**his past October, the American Health Care Association hosted an Interactive Nursing Home Exhibit at its 58th Annual Convention in Boston. In two perfect marriages of technology and patient care, Cornerstone Health Care partnered with American HealthTech, and Genesis HealthCare partnered with It's Never Too Late, to demonstrate

conducted a needs assessment, realized they would need a stronger information technology system, and built a road map to where they wanted to be in the future. They chose to revamp Cornerstone's clinical and financial software and work toward going paperless.

"While we had had a clinical software product in use for a while, we realized that we would need a stronger one that went beyond the basics to an integrated clinical workflow," says Jeff

of innovative technology; Cornerstone asked American HealthTech, a company it had worked with successfully in the past, to design its product. One of the central components of the upgrade was implementation of a system for charting patient information electronically. Staff at Cornerstone now chart using either a hand-held personal digital assistant or a computer that is near the patient's room. Every clinician or therapist that needs access to information can get it in real-time.

Burgundy Mead, licensed practical nurse-medical records at Cornerstone, says, "From a single dashboard, I can see how the entire facility is performing. That allows me to produce reports with specific action steps."

Electronic charting allows facility staff to "spend less time charting and more time with the resident," says Cantrell. The system "has improved efficiency and given us better access to information. The key thing is that we don't have to be thinking about a future date when the electronic record goes into effect."

Electronic charting is one of several innovations that American HealthTech brought to Cornerstone; others include major technological enhancements to Cornerstone's financial management systems.

Working on this project was just the kind of work American HealthTech likes to be involved with, according to Bill Caldwell, president and chief executive officer (CEO). "For us the highest prize we can get is when we know our effort behind the scenes makes a difference on the floor," he says. "Our



**A simulator bicycle tests a resident's range of motion.**

how technology can enhance long term care.

Several years ago, Cornerstone Health Care decided it was time for an upgrade of the company's management systems. Cornerstone's leadership team

Cantrell, chief financial officer of Cornerstone.

### Going Electronic

There are many companies out there that can help a facility take advantage

# TECHNOLOGY

## *nursing home exhibit.*

job is, through technology, freeing up hands to touch people.”

The upgrade also paid large dividends from an efficiency standpoint. According to Cantrell, Cornerstone’s return on investment has already exceeded \$150,000 per location, and the company expects more than \$2 million in annual salary savings once all 11 facilities are fully implemented. He recommends the approach to companies large and small. “There is technology that is available today and affordable that can help even the smallest facility manage their business more effectively,” he says.

### **Stimulating The Mind**

The second part of the Interactive Nursing Home exhibit featured It’s Never 2 Late (IN2L), a company that develops systems that provide a variety of activities that can be integrated into

a facility’s therapy department. IN2L integrates the various hardware, software, media, ergonomic, and adaptive components necessary to allow virtually any person with an interest in using a computer—regardless of background and physical or intellectual abilities—to do so pleurably and with minimal frustration.

The exhibit featured long term care residents from Genesis HealthCare facilities on-site—demonstrating a variety of adaptive devices and engagement tools. The residents used flight simulators, driving simulators, virtual bikes, and a karaoke machine. IN2L also offers communications programs that let residents send messages and photographs to family members and touch-screen technology that makes all of their software easier to use. IN2L’s systems allow residents to stay connected, mentally

active, and in touch with their families. Genesis HealthCare has embraced the IN2L model, enabling its staff to incorporate cutting-edge technology into their therapeutic methods. The Genesis residents who participated in the exhibit all spoke about the ease of use of the machines and how much they enjoy them.

“One of the primary goals of our company has been to find creative ways to embrace the world of dementia from a technological perspective,” says Jack York, founder and CEO of IN2L.

While many nursing facility residents have had little experience with computers before, this innovative and inspiring exhibit showed how, regardless of age or experience, digital technology has the power to enhance the long term care experience. All of those who are interested in learning more about how to upgrade their technology should contact Sharon Purvis at [spurvis@ahca.org](mailto:spurvis@ahca.org). ■



**American HealthTech demonstrates portable nursing station.**



**Clinical data are at caregivers' fingertips.**