



Quick, cost-effective nurse call system overhaul enhances Sharon Towers caregiving.

“We’re trying to make life simpler and easier so everybody can just look at one screen and see what’s going on versus having to take a look at this screen, then that screen. So, with RCare, it’s a lot better.”

— Jody Williams, IT Director, Sharon Towers

CASE STUDY SNAPSHOT



ABOUT SHARON TOWERS

Sharon Towers is a life-plan community (continuing care retirement community, or CCRC) offering independent living in a choice of cottages or apartments, as well as assisted living and skilled nursing care. Founded in 1969 by Presbyterian leaders in Charlotte, N.C., the not-for-profit community focuses on successful aging through vitality. Its wooded, 28-acre campus is home to about 330 residents supported by about 285 staff members, including about 60 caregivers.

Website: <https://sharontowers.org>

CHALLENGES

- One Sharon Towers nurse call system vendor increased its annual fees by a startling 500 percent, to take effect in just over three months.
- Finding and implementing an alternative, cost-effective solution was especially challenging on such short notice.

SOLUTIONS

- A takeover nurse call system solution from RCare, which leverages existing infrastructure.
- The solution retains the inbound infrastructure for residents making nurse calls, while upgrading outbound systems for caregiver notifications, the server, and overall system management.

RESULTS

- Installed and operational in about three weeks, beating the deadline by nearly a full month—and bypassing disruptive “rip and replace” approaches.
- Savings of close to \$20,000 per year by eliminating recurring fees.
- A simplified and enhanced caregiving process, through modern features that make it easier and faster to respond.
- Excellent service responsiveness and problem resolution from Signal Technologies.

“I love the call bell reporting online. I can see actual response times, run a report, and even do a cold audit, so it’s helping us to improve our quality of care.”

— Elizabeth Byrd, Vice President of Health Services, Sharon Towers



A COST-EFFECTIVE, FAST-TO-IMPLEMENT NURSE CALL SYSTEM OVERHAUL

In 2018, Sharon Towers began a major construction project, making the hospital-like setting of one of the original towers homier. The nurse call system provider for that project, RCare, had described a relatively low-cost “system takeover” capability it offered. The takeover solution retains existing nurse call infrastructure, while moving the community’s database to an upgraded system server offering better management of incoming alerts and caregiver notifications.

Sharon Towers IT Director Jody Williams found it was the only replacement solution on the market that leverages the existing nurse call infrastructure, saving time and money.

So the CCRC asked RCare, can you reduce our costs with your system takeover approach—and can you do it in two months?

RCare’s response: yes and yes! And with the January 1 deadline looming, Sharon Towers said, “Yes,” to RCare.

RAPID INSTALLATION TIMELINE

Work began in October. After receiving validation of Sharon Towers’ existing database, an RCare team worked off-site to program the new database and server to respond with 100 percent accuracy to alerts from nearly 400 sources. These include fire alarms and smoke detectors, as well as pendants, pull cords, and panic buttons for about 100 residents, relayed through more than 50 repeaters around the campus.

RCare completed the planning and programming work in less than three weeks, setting the stage for the onsite installation by Signal Technologies, an RCare integrator covering the Southeastern United States. During installation, the system was off-line for just 15 minutes while the old server was powered down and the new server hooked up. The team then tested each connection, completing their work on day 2.

“RCare did really good work with the old database file,” said Signal Technologies Business Development Manager Shawn Crews. “We had zero issues on that side.” And after a full implementation test and additional optimizations, “we’ve been operating at 100 percent ever since,” Williams said.

SAVING WHILE STREAMLINING

Sharon Towers made the switch to RCare in December 2021, nearly a full month before their deadline.

The new solution delivers significant cost savings—**close to \$20,000 per year**—simply because RCare sells its equipment outright as a capital expense that carries no annual service fee. In addition, the acquisition cost is considerably lower than that of a rip-and-replace solution.

According to Williams, the RCare solution has performed well, and when issues have arisen, the RCare and Signal Technologies teams have responded—and resolved the problems—quickly.

The system also is contributing to improved caregiver response times, due in part to pre-formatted reports that simplify response time tracking for identifying and correcting issues. And it streamlines alert monitoring by delivering all caregiver-relevant alerts to a single screen.

“Once the construction project is completed, we’ll probably look at what else they can do for us,” Williams said. Odds are good that another opportunity awaits for both Sharon Towers and RCare to once again say, “Yes.”

For more information, visit: rcareinc.com

