smartlinx

THE ADMINISTRATOR'S PLAYBOOK TO
DELIVER QUALITY CARE AT LOWER COST

Modernize your workforce management system for skilled nursing and long-term care

TABLE OF
CONTENTS

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN':
CEOs ARE ON THE HOOK FOR CARE QUALITY AND COST EFFICIENCY

Mounting pressure to improve resident outcomes while containing costs are dramatically changing skilled nursing and senior care operations. Overwhelming evidence puts CEOs at the forefront of this evolution tasked with delivering quality care at lower costs. Since the first round of Value-Based Purchasing penalties and the rapid rollout of the Patient-Driven Payment Model (PDPM), many senior executives are struggling to adapt to a new world of lower reimbursements, higher resident expectations, and increasing compliance pressures. Nowhere is this trend more evident than in CMS' Five-Star Ratings. Providers and consumers alike are placing more emphasis on this rating than ever before. According to the Brookings Institute, a nursing home that receives three stars in an on-site inspection may

only receive a $10.44 profit from treating one patient for one day. However, if the nursing home gains two additional stars after self-reporting quality and staffing to achieve an overall rating of five stars, its expected profit increases to $16.88. At the same time, operators are struggling with retaining frontline caregivers amid estimated turnover rates that range from 45 to at least 66 percent on a conservative side, adding financial pressure to an industry already plagued with an overall median operating margin below zero. Still, the number of care hours per resident per day delivered will continue to be an important contributor to residents' quality of care. Given this troubling scenario, how can CEO's and administrators deliver quality care (as measured by CMS Five-Star Ratings) and lower operating costs?

Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) - Median Operating Margin
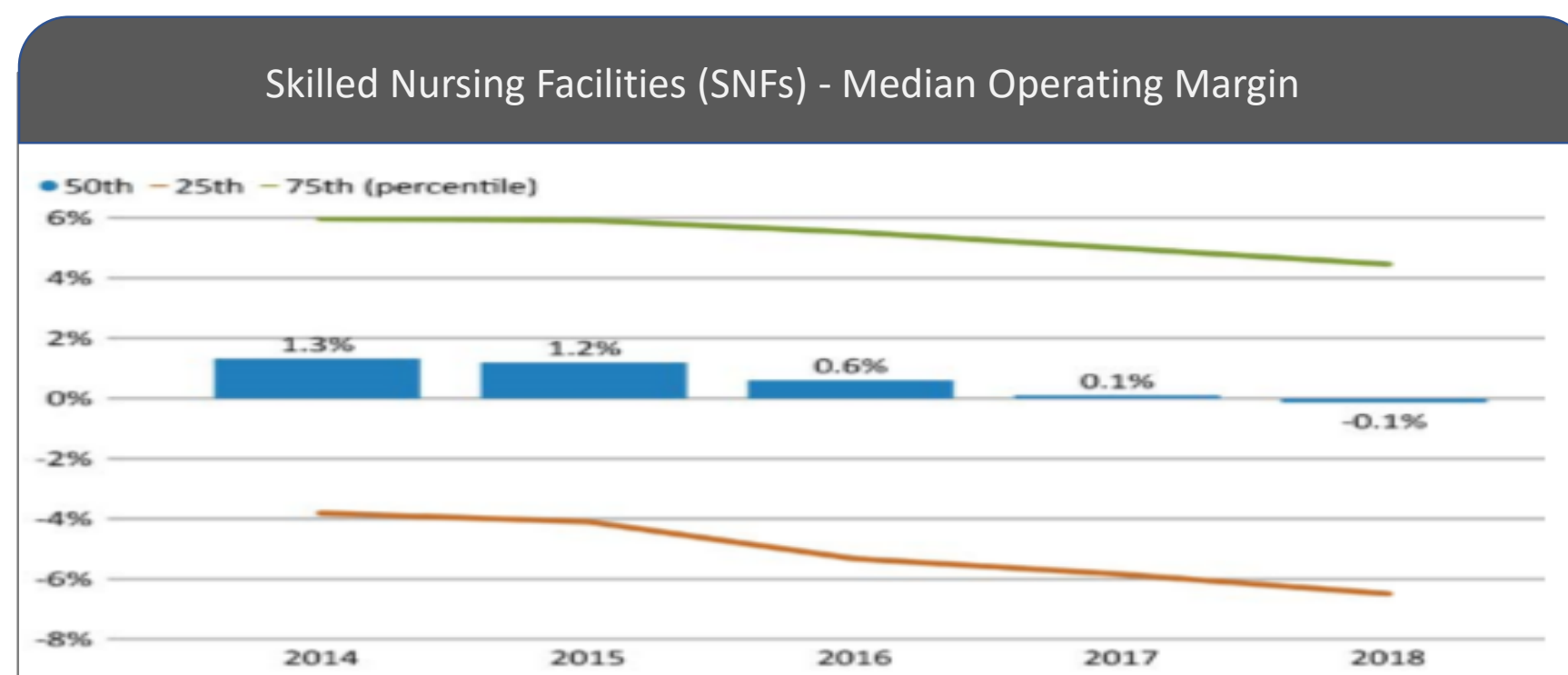
Source: CMS

> **"The trend in decreased operating margins supports the premise that the status quo will no longer suffice for SNFs moving forward, and that SNFs must pursue bold strategies to find long-term sustainability."**
>
> Corey Rutledge
> *34th SNF Cost Comparison and Industry Trends Report*

THE OPERATOR'S STAFFING CHALLENGE

How can you improve care quality while reducing operating costs? Direct care staff are critical contributors to resident well-being. Future-ready CEOs need to lead the charge by embracing change and transforming the status quo. The buck stops with CEOs, they own spending, compliance and outcomes for every caregiver activity from taking vitals to serving meals, from cleaning resident areas to assisting residents into beds, from administering medications to determining treatment plans, from assigning employees, to monitoring overall facility care and more.

While CEOs are on the hook for value-based care and operational efficiency, most are painfully hindered by an archaic system of managing work. One that often involves stitching together data pertaining to resident needs and employee schedules with actual staffing data and then connecting all of it to regulatory demands *before* they can get an accurate view of staffing needs. If everything stays the same, cobbling static data into a spreadsheet can work. But larger providers (100+ staffed beds, multiple facilities), face ongoing changes to staff coverage, compliance needs, and care hours and quality, overwhelming their ability to manage this complexity. Creating "optimized" employee schedules may look good on paper, but how do you really know your true staffing situation, planned and unplanned staffing gaps?

Inflaming the agony that siloed workforce management yields is its inability to provide granular staffing insight (not schedules) and practices to support CMS and ACA-requirements. By providing stale, inaccurate

staffing information, these disparate systems prompt erroneous conclusions about what's working and what's not in the drive for quality and compliance. For the demands of modern skilled nursing and long-term care operations, siloed workforce management tools are woefully inadequate. They:
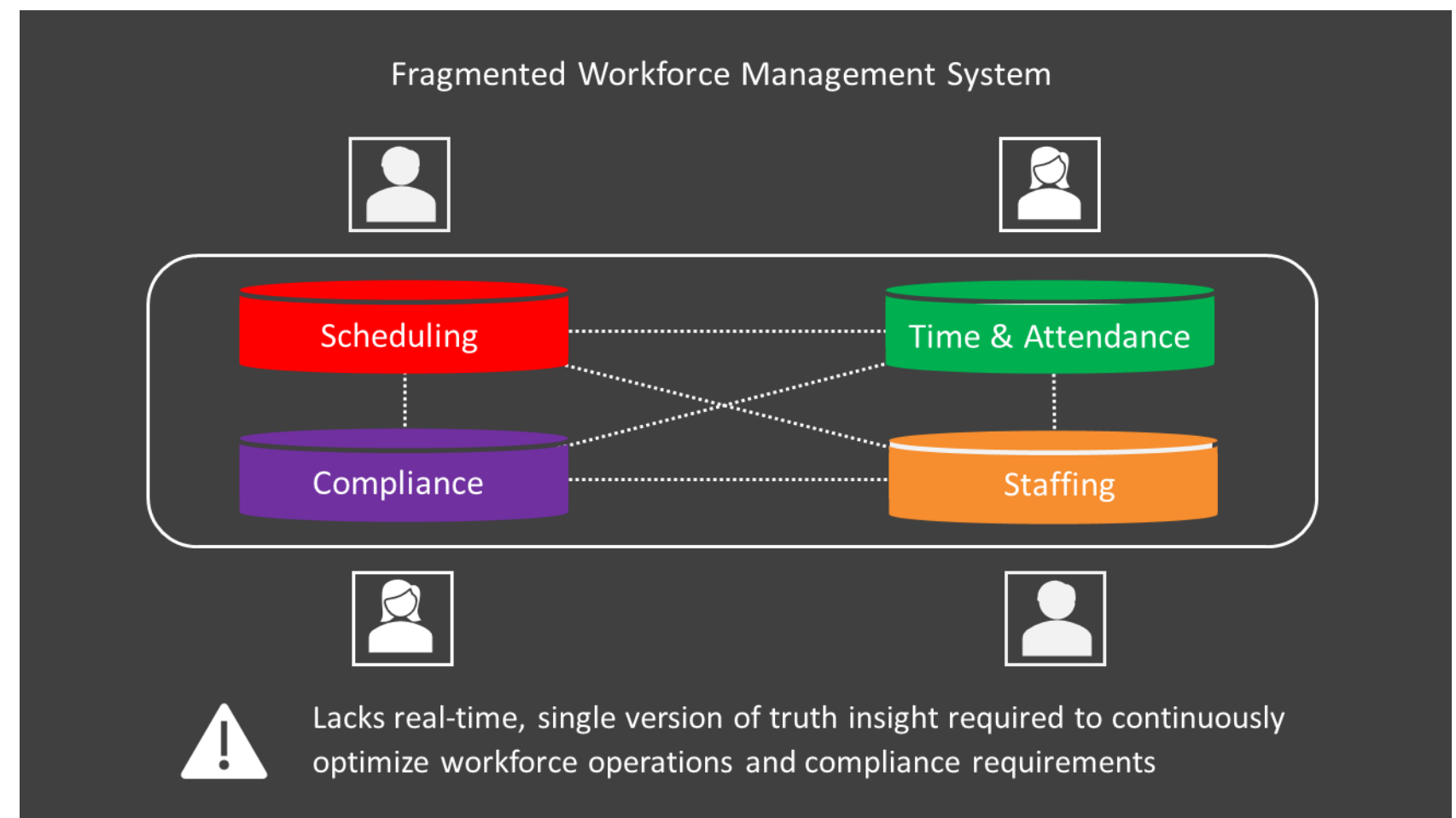
Distort your true staffing picture, giving "optimized" employee schedules, but lacking the ability to connect schedules in real time to staff attendance, causing overstaffing as well as excessive overtime and agency use.

Force you to manually prepare PBJ reports, cobbling together and classifying statutory data like overnight shifts or contractor hours, consuming time & resources and risking errors and penalties.

Keep you in "staffing anarchy," causing you to triage data from multiple sources, such as scheduling, time & attendance, and spreadsheets to stay on top of staffing & compliance demands in real time.

Fragmented Workforce Management System

Scheduling · Time & Attendance · Compliance · Staffing

Lacks real-time, single version of truth insight required to continuously optimize workforce operations and compliance requirements
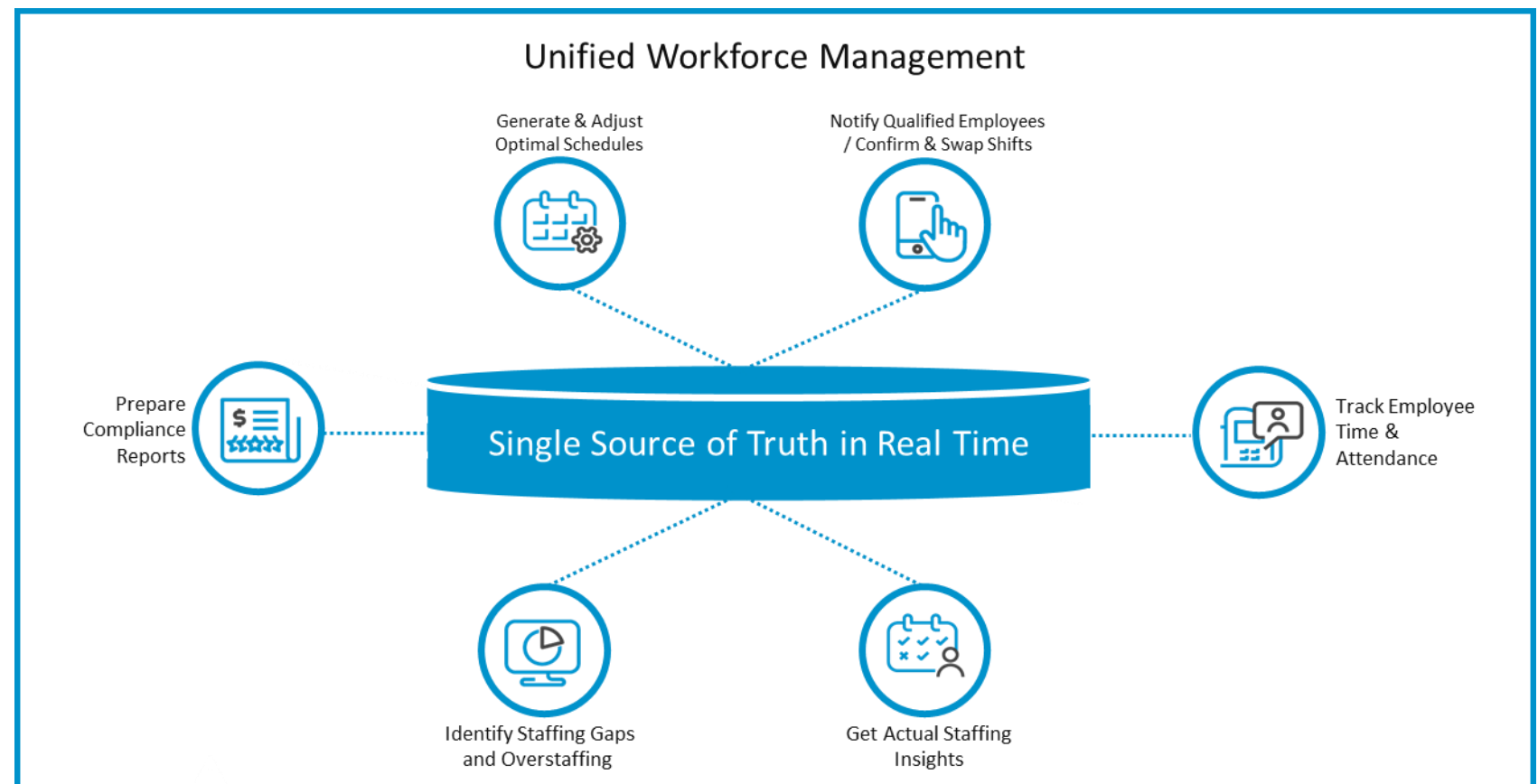
UNIFY YOUR WORKFORCE OPERATIONS DATA TO A SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH IN *REAL TIME*

To solve this systemic and pervasive pain and obtain the staffing insight needed to maximize care quality and operational efficiency, CEOs and administrators must lead the charge to forging a workforce management approach that can deal with the rigors of today's skilled nursing and senior care operations. This means unifying workforce operations data under a single source of workforce truth, which automatically adapts in real-time to reflect the end-to-end workforce management process from workforce scheduling to time & attendance tracking to compliance reporting over a dynamic and regulatory-driven resident journey.

To start your workforce management transformation, you will need to modernize your current approach around a central source of workforce operations truth with the following must-have capabilities, including the ability to:

1. Automatically generate optimal employee schedules in real time based on resident acuity, nursing hours per patient day (NHPPD), and service changes across multiple facilities, and adapt to ever-changing resident and regulatory demands.

2. Instantly find and recommend best qualified employees to fill open shifts based on skill, overtime status and company policies, and provide equal opportunity & flexibility for qualified staff to fill shifts.

3. Automatically identify true staffing gaps or overstaffing in real time including planned & unplanned changes.

4. Instantly communicate with care workers in real time via any mobile device:
   a. Notify employees of scheduling changes and available open shifts.
   b. Enable employees to sign up for open shifts and request time off.
   c. Enable employees to swap shifts with each other.

5. Continuously organize all CMS and ACA-required staffing information in real time to comply with the latest federal and state regulations and deliver audit-ready reports on demand, including overnight shifts and contractor hours.

6. Automatically analyze hourly staffing data and CMS calculations in real time that could negatively impact CMS Five-Star Ratings and proactively recommend steps to correct staffing issues to protect and improve your rating for each facility.

Unified Workforce Management

Generate & Adjust Optimal Schedules

Notify Qualified Employees / Confirm & Swap Shifts

Prepare Compliance Reports

Single Source of Truth in Real Time

Track Employee Time & Attendance

Identify Staffing Gaps and Overstaffing

Get Actual Staffing Insights

ENGAGE DIRECT CAREGIVERS WITH WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

In long-term and senior care facilities, employee engagement directly impacts the level of care employees give residents. A modern workforce management system engages employees through mobile technology that lets employees:

Take control of their schedules. When employees can quickly find and respond to new schedules well in advance, they can more easily balance work and family responsibilities, which fosters better feelings about their employer.

Adjust easily to their life demands. If they can't work a scheduled shift, employees can use their mobile device to notify the right people, swap shifts among each other, and even request time off.

Understand their finances. With their hours and pay varying from week to week, employees want to quickly access timecards, paystubs and detailed pay history with the ability to fix any punch errors without contacting HR.

Work at remote locations. As more direct caregivers and other staff work in remote locations, such as home health-aids, they can easily punch in at authorized remote sites while communicating with management.

Research continues to confirm the link between engagement and productivity and loyalty. "Engaged employees make it a point to show up to work and do more work -- highly engaged business units realize a 41% reduction in absenteeism and a 17% increase in productivity. Engaged workers also are more likely to stay with their employers," according to Gallup.

"85 percent of engaged employees displayed a genuinely caring attitude toward patients, compared to only 38 percent of disengaged employees while 91 percent of engaged employees recognize their workplace as dedicated to patient care, compared to only 42 percent of disengaged employees."

HR Solutions
Survey of 29,000 healthcare employees

LINK NURSE STAFFING TO COST AND FIVE-STAR QUALITY WITH WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

The number of nursing care hours residents receive per day (HPPD) plays a key role in a facility's CMS Five-Star Quality Rating System. CMS uses the system to judge the experience a skilled nursing facility provides Medicare recipients and publishes the ratings to help consumers compare providers and promote higher overall quality of care.

Star ratings can make or break your reputation as a LTC provider. However, "75% of skilled facilities were almost never in compliance with what CMS expected

their staffing level to be based on residents' acuity," according to a report by Harvard and Vanderbilt universities. Given this staffing dilemma and the mounting pressure to deliver quality care at lower costs, how can CEO's and administrators provide the right staffing level (per CMS Five-Star Ratings) while reigning in staff and overtime costs?

Complying with CMS' strict staffing requirements can be daunting when navigating fluctuating PPD census values and sudden scheduling changes. Operators can no longer rely on standard scheduling procedures. They must track multiple scheduling variables, close gaps and share data between Payroll-Based Journal, scheduling, attendance, payroll, and employee communication systems—in *real time*. Using modern workforce management technology can optimize and preempt staffing gaps by enabling operators to:

Create optimal nurse schedules based on resident acuity and nurse overtime status.

Notify qualified nurse staff of open shifts and enable them to sign up, anywhere, anytime.

Allow nurse staff to access schedules, swap shifts, and adjust time off

Analyze staffing data and latest CMS criteria to predict a Five-Star Rating for any facility, anytime.

Proactively alert operators of impending staffing issues that will damage Five-Star Ratings.

"There is considerable evidence of a relationship between nursing home staffing levels and resident outcomes. The CMS Staffing Study, among other research, found a clear association between nurse staffing ratios and nursing home quality of care."

CMS
Design for Nursing Home Compare
Five-Star Quality Rating System User's Guide,
October 2019

TRILOGY HEALTH SERVICES ADVANCES QUALITY CARE AND REDUCES COST

"SmartLinx definitely enhances our ability to do predictive scheduling…we have the ability to look closely at resident needs and tailor care based on staff competencies."

- Barbara Dimercurio, Chief Nursing Officer

Founded December 1997, Trilogy Health Services is a customer service-focused provider of senior living and long-term healthcare services. Trilogy communities offer a full range of personalized services, from independent and assisted living, to skilled nursing and rehabilitative services.

When Trilogy leaders wanted to advance the quality of care at its assisted living, skilled nursing, and dementia care services, they wanted technology to help them proactively ascertain resident needs and analyze staffing dynamics across its 110 facilities, as well as navigate evolving healthcare demands. Trilogy staff wanted to view staffing information in one system and competency levels of each staff member to determine the best care for each resident (RNs, LPNs, CNAs, med techs) to be able to tailor care for each resident.

In addition to streamlining nurse scheduling and staffing, Trilogy wanted to better understand interrelated staffing and financial implications in each facility, and eliminate the painstaking manual work of calculating scheduling and attendance data to demonstrate ACA and Payroll-Based Journal compliance for all their facilities. However, the disparate processes and data lacked transparency into these implications.

Trilogy installed the SmartLinx Workforce Management Suite, which includes:

- ☑ Schedule Optimizer
- ☑ Time & Attendance
- ☑ Payroll-Based Journal
- ☑ Employee mobile app

SmartLinx centralized all disparate scheduling, attendance, and compliance systems on one unified suite. Trilogy staff can now visualize real-time labor-related data across all facilities on one user-friendly dashboard that lets them identify performance trends and inefficiencies and make smarter business decisions.

Now when a scheduling change occurs in one facility, employees with similar skills in multiple facilities and whether they are projected to incur overtime. SmartLinx notifies qualified employees of open shifts and enables nurses and other staff to respond immediately from their mobile phones and even swap shifts with others. SmartLinx also creates audit-ready Payroll-Based Journal reporting, enabling Trilogy to manage compliance for 110 facilities with a mouse click.

Watch the Video

EXCELERATE HEALTHCARE DRIVES EFFICIENCY AND CUTS COSTS IN 8 FACILITIES

"We chose SmartLinx based on their proven track record reducing labor costs for long-term care organizations. We realized the solution's ROI in year one."

- Archie Shkop, Chief Financial Officer

Founded in 2013, Excelerate Healthcare Services doubled in size in recent years. Rapid expansion requires the organization to continually incorporate new scheduling, attendance, payroll and compliance systems into its infrastructure. Excelerate struggled to manage disparate systems and automate varied processes, including five standalone payroll systems and multiple attendance systems.

Excelerate wanted to better analyze key metrics and conduct proactive business planning, as well as improve workforce operations. They also strove to contain rising labor costs while providing quality care. In addition, the management company sought to ensure that its seven skilled nursing facilities comply with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid regulations and qualify for full reimbursements. However, evolving regulatory requirements and the disparate systems made compliance problematic.

In addition to consolidating disparate labor management and compliance processes in one centralized system, Excelerate wanted the new solution to enhance its ability to deliver quality resident care by incorporating Per Patient Day (PPD) census values into scheduling, planning, and analysis.

Excelerate installed the SmartLinx Workforce Management Suite, which includes:

- ☑ Schedule Optimizer
- ☑ Time & Attendance
- ☑ Payroll and Payroll-Based Journal
- ☑ Employee mobile app

SmartLinx centralized all disparate scheduling, attendance, payroll, and compliance systems on one unified suite. Excelerate staff can now visualize real-time labor-related data across all facilities on one dashboard that lets them identify performance trends and inefficiencies and make smarter business decisions.

Excelerate is tracking HPPD, turnover ratio, approaching overtime report daily. Excelerate is leveraging real-time visibility into staffing data to proactively manage schedules and preempt under/overstaffing. Excelerate reduced overtime expenses by 30%, decreased HPPD by 15% without impacting resident care by cutting overtime not clinical care hours. With a unified workforce management system, Excelerate is poised to easily integrate new facilities.

View the Case Study

FIND OUT MORE

Become a future-ready CEO/administrator with modern workforce management.

Workforce management has been re-thought for the modern, skilled nursing and long-term care organization. Find out how you can solve the pain of workforce staffing and compliance and become a workforce management champion, giving you and your team the vision and data they need to deliver quality care with less spend.

Stop juggling or delaying workforce management problems. Take the first step of taking control of your workforce management operation.

Ready to check out how SmartLinx can help you?

Schedule a demo now.

Request a Demo

Want more informative content to help you streamline workforce staffing and compliance?

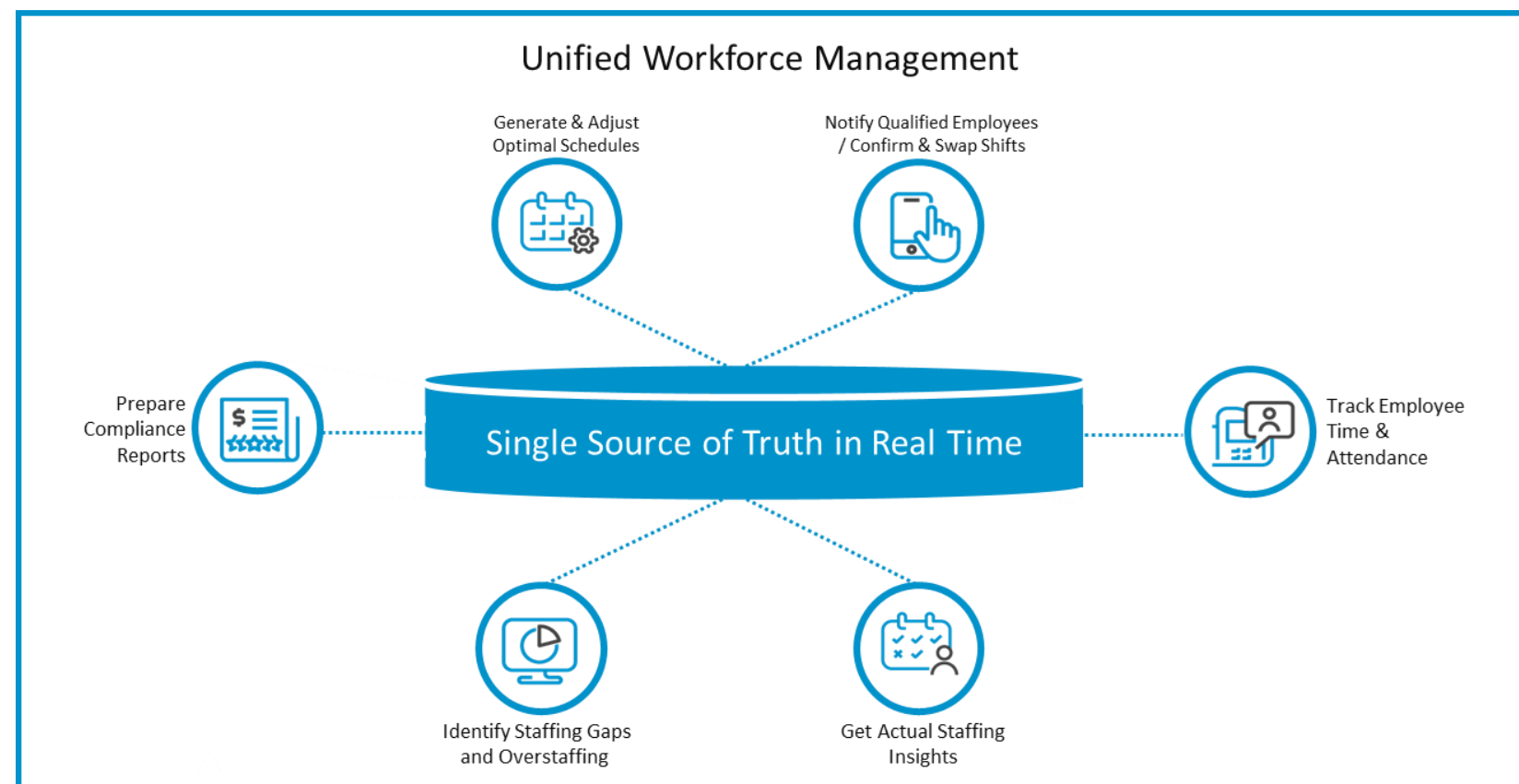[Blog] The Growing Influence of Five-Star Quality Ratings in LTPAC

[E-book] Centralizing Workforce Management: The Secret to Success for Long-Term Care Facilities

[Blog] How to Use a Mobile App to Enhance Employee Productivity

[Webinar] 7 Secrets to PBJ Success

[Case study] Trilogy Health Services Advances Quality Care and Reduces Costs

[Case study] Excelerate Healthcare Drives Efficiency and Cuts Costs at 8 Facilities

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ABOUT SMARTLINX

SmartLinx is a workforce management company that empowers every provider with the insight to deliver quality care at lower cost. With an exclusive focus on long-term and senior care, SmartLinx workforce management platform delivers the most complete workforce visibility with real-time insight and 100% data fidelity to help you optimize caregiver staffing, enhance employee engagement, and ensure regulatory compliance. To request a free demo, visit get.smartlinxsolutions.com/smartlinx-request-demo/