

Connection

SUMMER 2022

Establishing a replicable model for senior life that is focused on brain health, wellness and purposeful living



Abe's Garden[®]
Community



Nelson Okojie, LPN, and Nurse Practitioner Mattie Brady, evaluate residents' medications.

Fewer Pills, Increased Benefits

Improving Quality of Life by Reevaluating – and Reducing – Medications

By Lori Latusek

Abe's Garden Community strives to continually identify and share ways to improve the quality of life for those living with dementia. Routinely reassessing medication needs, making prescription adjustments, and establishing non-pharmacological treatments is an approach practiced by our care team that has resulted in decreased prescriptions and increased daily benefits for our memory support residents.

Managing the care of older adults who have been diagnosed with one or more chronic conditions, such as Alzheimer's disease, presents a unique set of challenges for clinical staff, as treatment typically results in polypharmacy (the simultaneous use of multiple over-the-counter or prescription medications or supplements). Treating coexisting health conditions with complex medication regimens can lead to safety concerns resulting from side effects and drug interactions.

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Deprescribing

The advanced information in recent years about the adverse effects of polypharmacy has motivated a push among healthcare providers to safely deprescribe (decrease doses or stop inappropriate or unnecessary medications).

Since partnering with Abe's Garden Memory Support Center of Excellence in December 2017 to provide on-site geriatric care to participating residents, Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Victor Legner, MD, MSc, and Mattie Brady, DNP, AGPCNP-BC, GS-C, have made reassessing medications a foundation of their practice. "Our goal is to help with the quality of life for residents but also ensure that medications aren't impacting their health in a negative way," says Brady.

Dr. Legner and Brady focus on a person-directed care approach by reviewing each resident's current health needs and goals, the risks and benefits of their medications, and the impact of their medication regimen on their daily life. They implement several checkpoints to review medications and determine if adjustments, weaning, or discontinuing may be appropriate.

Their specialized training in geriatric care – Dr. Legner is a board-certified geriatrician, and Brady is certified as a geriatric specialist nurse practitioner – helps them assess medications specifically in older adults.

Often, individuals remain on the same drug treatment for decades. However, bodies and needs change over time, and certain medications may no longer be needed. "It's important to reevaluate what health considerations are important and what each individual's need is at this point in their life to determine which medications are still appropriate," Brady explains.



Non-Pharmacological Therapy

Along with Dr. Legner and Brady, Abe's Garden Community's clinical team uses non-pharmacological interventions to ensure the quality of life at all stages of dementia. "When new behaviors arise in a resident or there is a health decline, we are not quick to increase medications," says Donna Finto-Burks, MSN, RN, Senior Director of Clinical Care. "Instead, we complete an assessment using an evidence-based tool created by the Hearthstone Institute called POWER™, which is a multidisciplinary team approach to identifying potential triggers to resident behaviors and discussing strategies for creating non-pharmacological therapeutic interventions. That process helps us pause, reflect, and gather more information to develop a plan of care with the family."

For example, team members from various departments gathered to discuss a resident who would become anxious or agitated in the afternoon. Through this brainstorming session, it was determined that the volume of the live music was the initial trigger for that behavior. Our staff then knew to be cognizant of upcoming activities that may impact this resident and to proactively guide the resident to avoid being near the activity, or to go on a walk in the courtyard so the agitation didn't occur.

The Abe's Garden Community team focuses on non-pharmacological interventions for residents like increasing activity participation, exercise, one-on-one attention, and assessing potential needs for physical, speech or occupational therapy.

Results

As a result of our various approaches to reducing pharmaceutical treatments, the average number of medications per memory support resident has

decreased from 9.3 in 2016 to 7.9 in April 2022. Additionally, the percentage of residents taking 9 or more medications has decreased from 48% to 28% in the same time frame.

"We've seen a positive outcome on quality of life," enthuses Brady. The observed benefits of reducing pharmaceuticals among our memory support residents include fewer medication side effects, such as dizziness, imbalance, dry mouth, constipation, and acid reflux. "Sometimes we find that a resident had a side effect to a medication that was being treated with another medication, so we're able to remove that side effect and a medication at the same time," she adds.

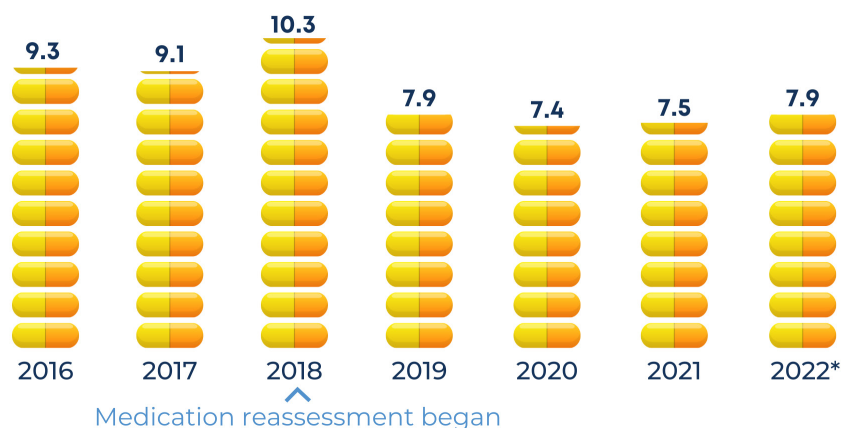
Decreasing medications also means residents have fewer pills to take. "As dementia progresses, we see an impact on the ability to swallow," Brady notes. "Therefore, cutting down on the number of medications really helps."

Additionally, we've seen improved mood, appetites, alertness and socialization among these residents. "They tend to be able to enjoy their family visits and interact with fellow residents more," beams Finto-Burks. "It's been wonderful to see!"

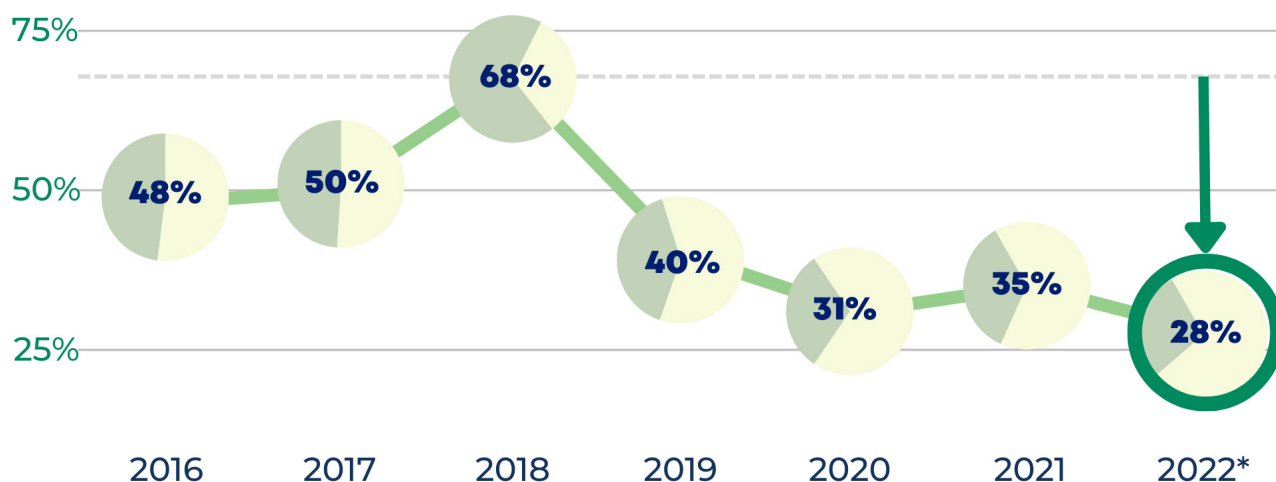


Senior Director,
Clinical Care
Donna Finto-Burks

Average Number of Medications per Abe's Garden Memory Support Resident



Percentage of Abe's Garden Memory Support Residents Taking 9+ Medications



*As of April 2022



Welcome Susannah Dwyer,

Abe's Garden Community's New Chief Executive Officer

Abe's Garden Community is honored to introduce Susannah Dwyer, BSCHons/RPT/L, as Chief Executive Officer. Susannah brings to the organization more than 25 years of leadership experience in senior living, home health, outpatient rehabilitation, and private duty home care. As a catalyst and change agent, she is known for driving long-term results and relationships. The highly accomplished industry leader is credited with growing and leading one of the most successful home health sales teams in the United States.

Susannah's executive-level experience provides insight and perspective to lead the high-performing team at Abe's Garden Community. "Throughout the interview process, I have been extremely impressed and energized by the leadership team. I felt an immediate connection to the mission and was blown away by the compassion, dedication and experience of the staff," shares Susannah. "I am thrilled with the opportunity to learn, grow and excel together."

Susannah will work closely with Chris Coelho, MMHC, who was appointed as Chief Operating Officer after serving as Interim Executive Director since June 2021. "I can't thank Chris enough for his leadership during the CEO search. It is evident that he is beloved by residents, family members and staff," comments Board Chair Mike Shmerling. "Chris and Susannah will work together with the rest of the team to set organizational strategies and ensure operational sustainability."

While growing up in the North of England, Susannah's weekends were spent with her grandmother, hearing

many life lessons and stories from years gone by. "One of Nanna's favorite sayings was, 'Two heads are better than one.' Maybe that's why I embrace the power of collaboration," she smiles.

Susannah has called Brentwood, TN, home for the last 15 years. Her children, Sam and Bella, are both pursuing undergraduate and graduate studies in service-related fields. She enjoys riding her horse, Mack, seeing the state's beautiful fall colors and experiencing the magic of the holiday season. "Life in Tennessee is fantastic," beams Susannah.

Susannah's first day is September 1.
Welcome, Susannah!





Donor Spotlight **Caroline and David Bartholomew**

"We know so many people who have been impacted by Alzheimer's," says Nashvillian Caroline Bartholomew. "It's a challenging disease that affects not only the person diagnosed but the whole family. David and I want more families who are navigating this disease near and far to have access to the great services and resources Abe's Garden Community offers."

"We are so grateful that our friends are responding and recognizing the importance of Abe's Garden Community."

Caroline and David Bartholomew know firsthand the reality of family members experiencing Alzheimer's. Her mother, Mary Katherine Gordon McNeilly, and his brother, Sam Bartholomew, were both diagnosed with the disease.

Caroline witnessed her father's challenges as her mother's in-home caregiver at a time when Abe's Garden Community's memory support services didn't yet exist.

When Abe's Garden Memory Support opened in 2015, Caroline and David, along with Sam's wife, Vicki, saw a more hopeful path for Sam, who became one of the first residents. Until his passing in 2019, Sam benefited

from the purposefully built dementia community in his hometown. "Once he moved in, Sam was more like himself," recalls David. "He was happy and active. He loved to attend the many music events and walk through the households and courtyard. He was still being Sam, just in a different way."

The Bartholomews, who have four children and five grandchildren, are thrilled to be at a point in their lives to make a significant difference with their charitable giving. In addition to being generous philanthropic partners, Caroline and David are raising funds so that Abe's Garden Community may continue to grow and help more people. "We are so grateful that our friends are responding and recognizing the importance of Abe's Garden Community," beams Caroline. (See photo of recent gathering.)

The generous couple are cognizant that as Music City continues to boom and the number of Alzheimer's cases around the world increases, so will the need for the best-practice programs, services and resources provided by Abe's Garden Community.

"Sam's experience as a resident was so great that Caroline and I are dedicated to helping more people benefit from the resources that Abe's Garden Community offers here in Nashville, nationally and even internationally," shares David.

Turning on the Lights

Advancing lighting research by assessing the impact of light exposure on those living with dementia

Abe's Garden Community is committed to discovering and implementing best-practice approaches in care, engagement and design that improve the quality of life for individuals impacted by dementia. Evidence-based lighting was an essential design element during the development of our memory support community. An abundance of natural light was incorporated throughout the hallways, common areas, and suites.

"Research is increasingly showing the importance of bright light during the day and minimal light at night for all people," says Chris Brown, Circadian Tunable Lighting Founder, Ultra Yield Solutions CEO, and Abe's Garden Community Board Member. "This is especially important for older adults living with dementia. It impacts quality of sleep, alertness, mood, and health outcomes."

While studies on lighting exist, there is a lot to be learned about its effect on those with dementia. We are passionate about helping advance this research.

Abe's Garden Community has partnered with Mariana G. Figueiro, PhD, and her team at the Light and Health Research Center at Mount Sinai to assess the effects that increased light exposure may have on sleep, mood and behavior of those living with dementia. Fifteen memory support residents who have been diagnosed with dementia and have difficulty sleeping at night or have symptoms of depression are participating in this light study, with the consent of their loved ones.

During the 3-month intervention period, these residents will be encouraged to sit at one of the specially designed tables for 1-2 hours per day for meals or engagement

activities. The square tables, created by furniture designer Dean Babin, emit two levels of light during the daytime.

Technology, including motion sensors and wearable devices, as well as systematic observational checks by Abe's Garden Community staff, will be used to measure any changes in sleep patterns, mood, engagement levels, and amount of movement. This data, along with geriatric depression screenings using the Neuropsychiatric Inventory, will be analyzed in pre- and post-evaluations to determine any impact of the light exposure.

Results of the completed research will be shared in the coming months.

This lighting research is made possible by grant funding from the Care Foundation of America.



A memory support resident creates art at a light table.

A Community of Support

Helping Families Navigate the Dementia Journey with Personalized Support, Guidance and a Plan

With an estimated 6.5 million Americans - including 120 thousand Tennesseans - ages 65 and older living with Alzheimer's disease and 13% of people over 45 experiencing subjective cognitive decline*, there is an increasing, ongoing need for residential memory care and support resources.

Our team continually identifies and develops offerings to meet the unique needs of those on a dementia journey. In addition to providing care and engagement through our residential community, home care service (Abe's Garden at Home), early-stage group (Abe's Garden Community Group), and day program (Abe's Garden Club), we provide caregiver support and guidance to family members well before – and whether or not – a loved one becomes a resident or program participant.

As our organization explores options for additional on-site assisted living and memory support suites to increase our residential capacity and allow us to serve more individuals with memory loss, our trained team provides unique guidance and support to family members who are preparing for additional care. Access to professional advice, knowledge, a monthly caregiver support group, family ambassadors, and personalized planning sessions is included in the cost of joining our waitlist. These perks are offered throughout the entire dementia journey, from the early to final stages, and to family members living near or far.

"We lead planning sessions to guide families through what 'being ready' for residential care looks like," says Judy Shmerling Given, LCPC, Senior Director, Campus Development. "This helps them think through overall well-being and care for the potential resident, themselves, and other family members." Planning

*according to The Alzheimer's Association®

Anne McGugin (r.) discusses her family's dementia journey with Judy Shmerling Given.

sessions typically average five hours of the participants' time across multiple meetings, which are followed by Judy's written summary and recommendations.

Additionally, caregivers virtually share with each other their challenges and thoughtful tips as they seek the right direction for their journey. During a recent support group meeting, a planning session participant expressed how helpful Judy's guidance was for him and his family and how important it is to make a plan before your loved one requires extra care. While it was decided that they are not quite ready for their loved one to receive residential support, he noted that the session started an important dialogue among his family members.

If you are interested in joining the waitlist to schedule a planning session, attend support group meetings, or benefit from other supportive offerings, please contact Judy at jgiven@abesgarden.org or **615.733.2682**.

"I cannot express how much Judy Shmerling Given, Senior Director, Campus Development and, just everyone at Abe's Garden Community, has helped me. It was so comforting to be a part of the caregiver support group and to be with other people going through this tough time with their loved ones."

– Caregiver Support Group Participant





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Use this QR code to view
our 2021 Annual Report or
go to <https://bit.ly/3CjcHQ8>

www.abesgarden.org



615.997.3030

Abe's Garden® Community is a
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Staff Spotlight: MEET RISA KLEIN HERZOG, DIRECTOR OF DONOR RELATIONS

30 years of raising charitable gifts

While new to the position of Director of Donor Relations, Risa Klein Herzog is no stranger to Abe's Garden Community.

Risa became passionate about the organization's mission before construction began. "As a native Nashvillian, I have been proud to support Abe's Garden Community and to watch its growth and success," she says. "We are so fortunate to have this world-class brain health institution in our backyard while it also serves as a global resource. Its reach is far beyond the physical walls!"

Risa will build upon philanthropic partner relationships and offer friends of the organization the gift of complimentary estate planning services through an affiliation with Thompson & Associates. She is excited to help donors realize the many ways they can support their philanthropic interests and dreams – with some guided planning.

"Risa is a driving force in philanthropy and brings over 30 years of experience," says Donna Coleman, Senior Director

of Marketing and Development. "She will positively impact the mission as she grows our philanthropic partnerships with individuals, corporations and foundations."

Prior to joining the team, Risa's fundraising career included 22 years working for the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, where she directed countless seniors to needed resources, including those offered at Abe's Garden Community.

"It's rewarding to continue my career working for an organization in whose mission I truly believe, and I'm honored to play a role in the Abe's Garden Community story," says Risa.

Risa and her husband reside in Nashville and have two grown daughters. She has inspiring and independent 85- and 90-year-old parents, and enjoys volunteering, cooking, hiking, aqua exercise, hot yoga, bocce, and music.