

BEST PRACTICES
**FOR STREAMLINING LONG-TERM CARE
ADMISSIONS PAPERWORK**

A Study of Risk Mitigation and Cost Reduction
for LTC Owners and C-Level Management

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LINCWARE

LTC LIABILITY COSTS PROJECTED TO INCREASE 6% IN 2017¹

Executive Summary: Why is this important now?

Considering that almost 70% of people turning age 65 will need long-term care at some point in their lives, it is critical to determine methods for reducing costs and improving service. Protecting revenue and the legal rights of all parties involved reduces cost and risk for the residents, families and the facility.

LincWare's report into the current status of the local LTC admissions documentation process is the result of our study. In it, we include advice for Best Practices for cost reduction and risk mitigation through the use of cloud-based electronic forms.

The current residents' paper intensive admissions process include many challenges. Using paper is costly from a labor and material standpoint and creates inefficiencies that result in revenue loss and compliance risk and less satisfactory experience for the the resident.

What are the Key Challenges?

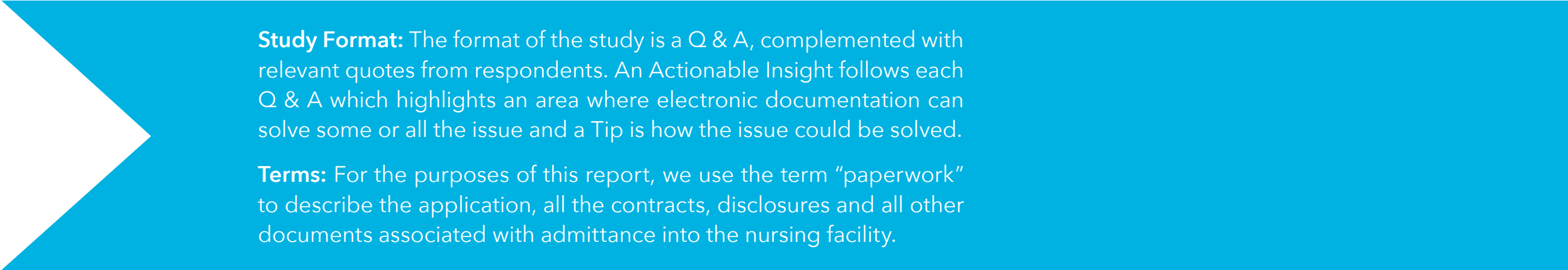
An e-admissions solution streamlines the process by eliminating human error resulting in less likelihood of violating government regulations and ensuring compliance with government regulations.

An e-admissions solutions helps CEOs/CTOs/CFOs drive down costs, mitigate risk and maximize revenue.

With an electronic repository of resident/patient data, better patient care is assured across the care spectrum from the time they are admitted to when they are discharged.

Automatic notifications and alerts can be built in to provide ticklers for social work, nursing, physical therapy, maintenance and the business office to recertify a resident's status, update financial information and get timely referrals for services.

1200 long-term health care providers in the United States reported that documentation was their biggest challenge.²



Study Format: The format of the study is a Q & A, complemented with relevant quotes from respondents. An Actionable Insight follows each Q & A which highlights an area where electronic documentation can solve some or all the issue and a Tip is how the issue could be solved.

Terms: For the purposes of this report, we use the term “paperwork” to describe the application, all the contracts, disclosures and all other documents associated with admittance into the nursing facility.

LTC ADMISSIONS PROCESS

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

MISSING CRITICAL PRE ADMISSION FORMS DURING THE INITIAL SCREENING CAN RESULT IN:

- Reimbursement denials because of missing signatures
- Star rating reductions due to misfiled resident paperwork
- Fines due to missing key disclosures or CMS denial letters
- Compliance overload

Before they walk in the door: Where does the resident's paperwork journey start?

Most residents enter Long-term Care (LTC) directly from a hospital usually due to an unplanned event, such as a fall or other health issue. In this situation, families and/or agents are under extreme stress to pull together all the documents needed to complete the paperwork for their loved one to be admitted.

In addition to the actual application, during pre-admission **there can be a dozen or more types of documents that have to be completed.** Currently most of these documents are paper based, in different formats, and various configurations. To ensure that no forms or signatures are missed, an admissions solution should automatically generate required documents based upon admission type.



Financials

Occupancy Agreement/Admissions Agreement

Primary Authorization (s)

Therapy, vision, podiatry, dental...etc.

Secondary Payer

Medicare ABN

Veteran Status

Disclosures

Insurance

PRE-ADMISSION PAPERWORK

Tip:

An e-admissions solution that offers smart, automated forms offers a number of opportunities to prevent fines from errors and omissions.

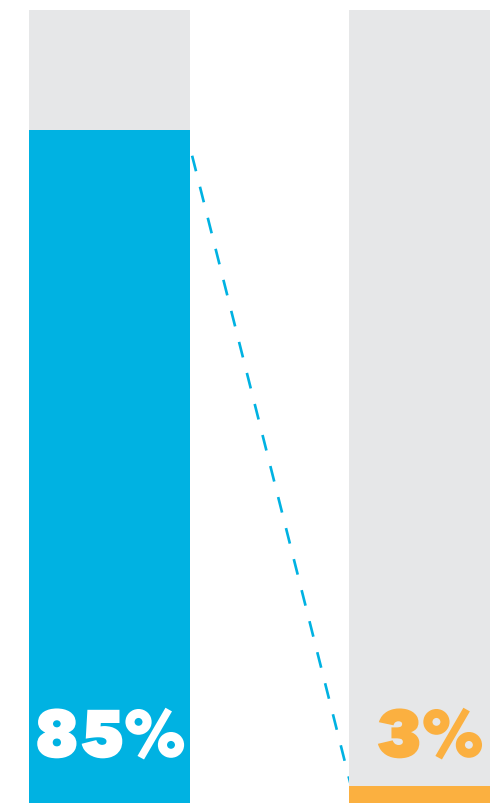
HOW IS ADMISSIONS DATA CAPTURED?

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Data provided for the admissions process is manually input into their records system by facility staff

Admissions data is captured overwhelmingly on paper. In fact, 85% of respondents said that less than 3% of their applications are filled out online.

In an ideal world, offering an online admission paperwork should encourage families to submit information in a secured electronic format which would provide much more flexibility for recordkeeping and documentation. Although some of the facilities offer an online admissions form that can be downloaded, filled out and mailed back, this option it is almost never used.



"I would like to have a system that is online and will not allow a form to be missed; they cannot continue with the remainder of the agreement until the page is initialed or signed."

Tip:

An e-admissions solution should be configured so that all questions MUST be answered on every form, every time, and ideally could be completed prior to first meeting with admissions personnel.

DO RESIDENTS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPLETE THE PAPERWORK?

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

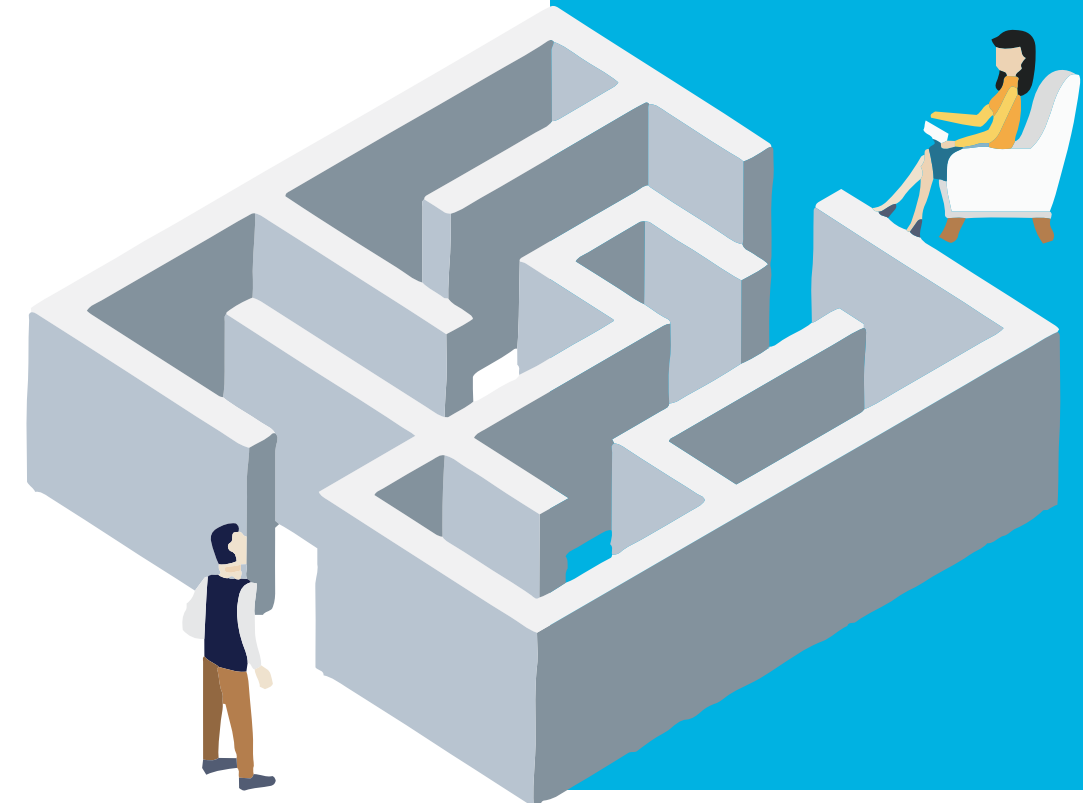
Digitize all internal and external forms in one repository to ease the resident's transition, reduce risk of non-compliance with government regulations and maximize reimbursements.

More than 70% of respondents say residents struggle with the paperwork process.

Often the LTC paperwork is started in the hospital, but is not completed until the LTC facility staff are doing admission paperwork with the family onsite.

In most cases, the onus for ensuring that all forms have a signature falls to the admissions or social work staff who are manually completing forms for families, with or without their families in attendance to assist. When the staff is not present to complete the forms, for example if the resident takes the forms home, it is more likely that signatures are missed.

"It would help if there was a way for families to have admission agreements completed prior to admission."



Tip:

Smart forms allow all signatures on each form at time of admission and ensure not a signature or document is missed.

HOW MUCH STAFF INVOLVEMENT DOES IT TAKE TO HELP RESIDENTS COMPLETE FORMS?

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Reduce the interaction required to complete paperwork

70% of the respondents say it takes a great deal of interaction or involvement to help residents complete the admission documentation and every facility must provide at least some level of assistance.

70%

“Filling out the forms with redundant information, having the resident sign EACH form, is a bottleneck.”

Tip:

Offer e-admissions forms that are intuitive and simple to complete.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE STAFF TO HELP RESIDENTS COMPLETE FORMS?

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

An e-admissions solution should provide guidance and help screens for each e-form, and populate all the personal data on every form, in advance of the resident receiving it.

Respondents reported that it takes 1-3 hours per resident to complete the admissions paperwork.

Usually staff are sitting with the resident and/or family and guiding them through each document in real time. And it doesn't stop there. Once the paperwork is completed, there are often supporting documents that need to be copied and saved as part of the resident record. These documents can include: a Power of Attorney, Financial Statements, Living Wills, insurance cards. This often causes personnel to "chase paperwork" after the resident is already at the facility.



"I spend too much time chasing paperwork. My time could be better spent looking over new referrals."

Tip:

Make it easy on families to complete paperwork, signatures and attach documents electronically through a secure portal - in advance of their admission meeting, by completing as much of the paperwork as possible before submitting it to the families.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE RESIDENT'S POWER OF ATTORNEY (POA) IS OUT OF THE AREA?

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Forms are more difficult to complete, collect, file and access when the financially responsible "agent" is not local.



The admissions paperwork process takes significantly longer when POAs are not accessible in person.

In fact, some facilities won't even consider an applicant unless their POA is local.

In addition, sometimes the family or person that has been assigned as the Power of Attorney (POA), also known as an Agent, is hesitant to assist with the paperwork because of a fear of financial liability. If a document requires a POA to authorize, staff should be able to send that document directly through the admissions system with everything that is needed.

Comments include that trying to get signatures/responses from out of area POAs typically occur using US mail which is difficult to follow up. Due to the volume of paperwork an admission agreement has, the POA doesn't usually want to have it emailed because they don't want to print the large packet of papers.

"This {POA} process generally involves traditional mail and can take weeks to send it and get it back."



Tip:

Remotely administer Power of Attorney (POA) document review and signature process with an e-admissions solution that makes it easy to read and sign documents online.

IS CAPTURING SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS IMPORTANT?

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Integrate forms for Veteran status verification, income, assets calculators and POA collaboration to ensure method of financial coverage is certain and accounted for.

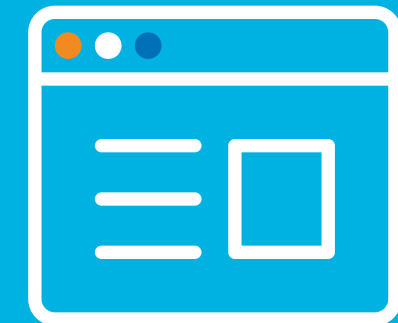
100% of respondents said that collecting documentation is critical and time consuming under the current paper-based process.

In addition, it was noted that losing this paperwork was easy to do during the admission process, especially when the paperwork is stored away for later review.

An e-admission solution should capture images of insurance cards and collect all insurance information on one screen, so nothing gets lost in translation. This avoids the all-too-common issue of having an organization lose revenue due to lack of coverage, outdated policies, or confusion about pre-authorization.

Supporting Documentation

- Insurance cards
- Living Wills
- Veteran documentation
- Social Security Card
- Medicare Cards
- Medicaid Card
- Power of Attorney
- Health Care Proxy
- Financial statements
- Trusts Agreement
- LTC Insurance Policy



Tip:

Capture all third party information by attaching PDFs, or scanning forms directly into the resident's electronic paperwork.

HOW EFFICIENT IS YOUR INSURANCE VERIFICATION PROCESS?

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

An e-admissions solution could reduce the time it takes to verify insurance from an average of 30 minutes to five minutes or less.



90% of respondents felt they had an efficient process for verifying insurance, and reported that it typically takes about 30 minutes per resident.

75% report that they rarely get complete and accurate information on the first attempt.

The verification process takes about a 20-40 minutes per resident, "...depending on the insurance company; some are better than others but it can be very time consuming."

Tip:

Have an electronic process that makes it simple and easy for anyone to accurately and consistently record the information collected, even without specialized training.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR CURRENT ADMISSION PROCESS OVERALL?

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Repetitive data entry for personal information should be eliminated, and there all information should be as accurately recorded as possible the first time.

100% of respondents reported that there was room for improvement to their admissions process.

While they had made their manual process as efficient as possible, most cited that the benefit of a massive paper reduction has far-reaching positive outcomes to an organization.

Examples of the parts of the process that could be positively affected by e-admissions are:

1. Repetitive data entry
2. Inaccurate information provided
3. Inability to share electronic data between departments



ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Improvements include having a cohesive process that involves getting the admission paperwork signed prior to the patient coming to the LTC.

Tip:

An e-admissions solution populates all fields where relative data can be replicated and forces the user to complete every field on every form before moving onto the next.

WHAT PART OF THE PROCESS COULD IMPROVE COLLABORATIVE CARE?

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

When disparate teams are brought together to care in unison, silos of critical information can be avoided, resulting in more revenue and satisfaction on all sides of the care spectrum, and creates accountability for each department involved in care.

The majority of respondents agreed that they need a system that is easy for all interdisciplinary departments to use and retrieve resident information.

The e-admissions solution should be open to all members of the care, business and maintenance teams, and the system should inform all members of the team about when they're needed in the admissions process.

To illustrate, an e-admissions solution can provide notifications so that all facilities personnel are alerted to what building, room, and physical needs each new resident will need. Likewise, the facility business office needs to be aware of all sources of resident income and assets. The software also needs to ensure that informative messages are disseminated by the system with all appropriate data needed to make care decisions more quickly.

Post Admission Documents

Maintenance Checklist
Activities Screening
Housekeeping Checklist
Social Work Personal History (Family history, activities, likes/dislikes)

"An e-admissions solution forces communication between departments and leaves no room for human error."

Tip:

Provide a graphical dashboard where all relevant departments can access the right information at the right time and creates accountability for each department involved in care.

SUMMARY

OUR

OBJECTIVE

LincWare helps long-term care (LTC) facilities reduce compliance risk, maximize insurance reimbursements and streamline resident admissions, through a cloud-based, online, e-admissions solution. In collaboration with some of New York's leading nursing facilities, LincWare studied current paper-intensive admissions processes to determine areas for improvement that could be served within the scope of their electronic documentation product development.

LincWare's goal is to further refine their cloud-based solutions to serve the needs of LTC facilities and the community which is seeing large numbers of residents entering homes directly from hospitals and often with little family support to complete the documentation required.

The issues of documentation in health care are not of course confined to New York. In fact, a recent study by Harmony Healthcare found that more than 1200 long-term health care providers in the United States reported that documentation was their biggest challenge.

To save time and labor costs, LTC facilities need to find ways to reduce the time to process new admissions and ease the transition for the resident. Electronic documentation is cost-efficient to implement and easy to use.

Let LincWare show you how.

Contact us at sales@lincware.com if you have questions regarding the report or LincWare's e-admissions solution, **Admit+**.