



**Holistic Continence Care**

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**Successfully Tackle  
Your Highest Areas of Spending  
While Improving Outcomes  
and  
Reducing Operational Costs**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As market conditions continue to challenge Long Term Care, it is important for providers to clearly understand all of their operating costs, as well as the associated resources required to meet their financial goals. Labor costs encompass between 50 to 70% of the operating budget for an extended care or skilled nursing facility (SNF), therefore use of proactive and effective staffing strategies are critical to managers, or they risk costly issues such as unrealistic workloads, high turnover and excessive overtime.

Incontinence management is a care area largely dependent upon staff to execute. It has been an operational issue known to be costly, not only due to the products required to manage the condition, but also because this represents a care area with far-reaching effects throughout facilities, with multiple impacts on staffing and Resident quality of life. Additionally, 30-40% of a Nurse's Aid's time is spent performing duties associated with incontinence, rather than other care duties for the Residents.

The management team of Superior Care Home Nursing and Rehabilitation Center was facing these challenges, and sought answers by engaging in a clinical study which included a full review of their incontinence care processes and systems with benchmarking and reporting, so that they could better understand opportunities for improvement.

Based on the first phase of the study findings and recommendations, the team worked in partnership with their incontinence products supplier and converted to new care protocols, supported by **Attends® high-quality, multi-void products with advanced state-of-the-art absorbent technologies available ONLY from Domtar Personal Care** and **Attends® Professional Care** skin care products. These changes resulted in documented clinical, operational, and financial benefits across the facility: increased staff satisfaction with the new **Attends®** products and protocols, improvements in care practices, and a reduction in the complications related to incontinence management — all of which yielded improved financial and operational outcomes.

This white paper outlines these improvements, focusing specifically on the positive financial and operational outcomes that were gained within the Superior Care Home community, by implementing care practices with the new clinical and product protocols during the course of the study.

For more information on this study and the positive impact and results documented by Holistic Continence Care, ask your Domtar Personal Care Representative for copies of our other two white papers.



## INTRODUCTION

According to the 2009 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Minimum Data Set (MDS) data, the cost of urinary incontinence among institutionalized Residents exceeds \$5.3 billion annually, with the majority of costs from purchasing products such as incontinence pads and/or laundry services. The average annual cost of fecal incontinence amounted to \$4,110 per person.

According to the June 2014 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, high rates of incontinence among nursing home Residents lead to multiple emotional and financial challenges throughout the facility. The report illustrated that approximately one-half (1/2) of all short-term nursing home Residents and more than three-fourths (3/4) of the long-term Residents could not completely control their bladder function or bowel movement two weeks before their assessment, and individuals over age 85 were more likely to be incontinent than those between ages 65 and 84.

Past research of this condition identifies that incontinence is associated with other conditions representing higher areas of clinical and financial risk for care providers — therefore contributing to overall higher operational costs. Incontinence is often associated with an increased risk for depressive symptoms and declining cognition. Regardless of care setting, incontinence is linked to higher rates of social isolation, depression, and psychological problems. Specific to extended care, incontinence contributes to higher risk factors, such as skin breakdown and infection, increased fall rates, and is associated with chronic conditions such as diabetes and stroke, mobility impairment, and other interacting factors such as bone fractures, urinary tract infections, and pressure ulcers.

With all of these risk factors, incontinence has been identified by industry experts as an excellent focus area for continuous quality improvement initiatives, such as the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) Federal initiative for Long Term Care, an extension of the 2010 Affordable Care Act. Accountability for quality and performance will be higher than ever. Care homes that do not meet the accepted federal standards for quality and patient outcomes will be penalized.

The continuing legislation evolving from Health Care Reform efforts has been the catalyst for many market changes and made post-acute providers more sensitive to risk factors. With that in mind, smart providers are reviewing their current practices to create a customized review program with benchmarks that yield a plan for improvement, with the goal of generating documented quality outcomes that will help improve their community partnerships and image as a preferred referral source.

Superior Care Home Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is a free-standing SNF in Paducah, KY operating independently, under private ownership for over 40 years. The overall goal of management was to implement a community-wide culture change initiative to increase care delivery practices, improve marketability to current and future consumers as a referral source, and raise overall Resident and family satisfaction levels. Their proactive approach was to conduct a facility-wide review of operations identifying gaps and improvements that could be implemented to increase the quality of life and community atmosphere in line with Culture Change practices. These efforts led to new partnerships and participation in the clinical study, with the goal of improving their continence management practices and the quality of life for their Residents. *The Clinical Study of Holistic Continence Care* was developed and conducted, with the aim of identifying improvement areas while testing new products and protocols, which could in turn be evaluated for effectiveness before implementation.



## BACKGROUND

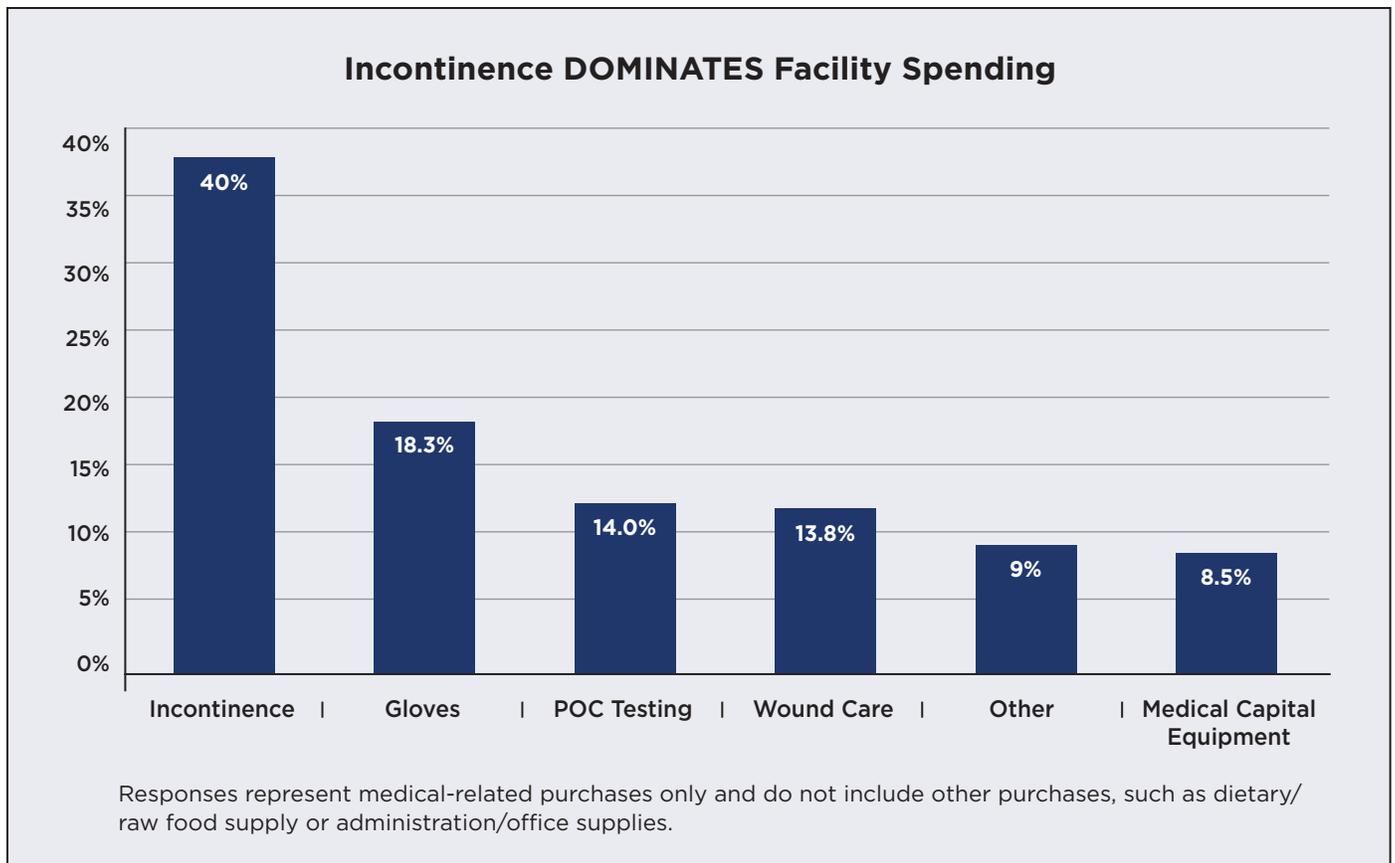
The total operating costs of incontinence care are higher than most realize, as it equates to hard costs traditionally measured, as well as to soft costs often not well understood or documented. When accurately assessing the total costs of incontinence, it clearly has a profound impact on a facility's financial performance and overall results.

*It only starts with the products.*

The 2015 Health Industry Distributors Association Survey of Extended Care Providers validated that incontinence products represent their highest level of product spending.

Savvy providers know that in addition to product cost, incontinence is an issue with a global effect on total costs, as it impacts several operational areas. Poor management of this condition leads to higher supply and labor costs, staffing inefficiencies, and can negatively impact marketability and census.

The staff at Superior Care Home Nursing and Rehabilitation Center recognized that incontinence care represented much more than the cost of the product and was an issue affecting the operations of their entire building. Their staff had a lengthy history of providing dependable incontinence care, including traditional practices of checking and changing Residents with incontinence every two (2) hours and providing toileting support as appropriate. While this traditional approach to care was effective, management saw the potential to initiate positive changes to even better support care and achieve greater efficiencies.





## SOLUTION and RESULTS

The Study Team performed a comprehensive onsite assessment of facility operations, including a review of data, documents, and live interviews.

The Clinical Study of Holistic Continence Care was conducted over a 12-week period. Residents admitted during the period received the newly-implemented continence care protocols and practices. This group of Residents also switched from the original nighttime multi-product practices to a new program of targeted nighttime care using **Attends® high-quality, multi-void products with advanced state-of-the-art absorbent technologies available ONLY from Domtar Personal Care and Attends® Professional Care** skin care products. Data was collected by both nursing and therapy staff utilizing the new tools, MDS assessments and therapy evaluations.

### The following findings directed the Study cost analysis:

- Absorbent products in use were not standardized, leading to the potential for incorrect sizing and fitting, increasing the risk for leakage, odor, incontinence-associated dermatitis, and urinary tract infections.
- The change rate for absorbent products was high: during the day hours, protective underwear products were used, and the protocol was to check every two (2) hours and change if wet. During the night hours (approximately 9:00 pm through 6:00 am), the care included using reusable underpads on the beds. Residents were checked every two (2) hours. Wet beds were changed often during staff rotations. This constant need to change wet beds drove up labor and laundry costs.
- It was evident that, although staff engaged in checking/changing Residents every two (2) hours, there was a need for further understanding of how to provide individualized care and how to select the right absorbent products for Residents. All staff, especially administrative staff, were interested in improving product selection and sizing, reducing inappropriate product application, minimizing waste, and adopting methods to support staff assessment and stocking practices, possibly with the use of a simplified formulary.
- The skin care protocol in place was soap and water. Evidence-based research has shown this method of perineal care is inadequate and potentially harmful on frail skin, as it contributes to skin breakdown and infection.
- There was also a higher fall risk associated with nighttime care practices. Residents attempted to ambulate to the bathroom because of wetness/cold/leakage. This occurred when Resident was tired, half-asleep, and possibly disoriented, so falls were a concern. Poor sleep negatively impacted balance and gait, increasing risk for falls.
- Residents did not appear to be experiencing restful, quality sleep, because there was not a protocol for nighttime incontinence care, or a high quality, multi-void incontinence management product in use. The existing interventions caused the Resident to be cold and wet while lying in bed and trying to sleep. In order for staff to follow their set two (2) hour checking schedule, the Resident was usually awakened during that process, causing highly fragmented sleep patterns. These practices increased the Residents' risk factors related to incontinence: disorientation, falling, daytime sleepiness, irritable moods, combativeness, and cognitive decline — with potential to significantly decrease their quality of life.

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*For more information on this clinical study and the positive impact and results documented by Holistic Continence Care including Attends® high-quality, multi-void absorbent products from Domtar Personal Care and improved Sleep Hygiene, ask your Domtar Personal Care Representative for copies of our other two white papers.*



## CLINICAL OUTCOMES

*“Do the right things clinically, and the financial outcomes will follow.”*

— Helen Sims, Superior Care Home Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

Since Superior Care’s management team wanted to further support and improve their Resident care and quality of life, they were eager to participate in this Clinical Study. Similar to any systematic review of operations, the study uncovered improvement areas and enabled the staff to initiate new processes to benefit both short-term and long-term stay Residents.

### Developed the clinical framework:

- Developed and implemented a new program for holistic continence care including an improved interdisciplinary approach between all functional areas, including regular care coordination between Nursing and Therapy to align and maximize outcome measures.
- Supported the program with a holistic assessment process, utilizing simple forms for staff to utilize that promoted individualized continence care and the highest possible quality of life for Residents.
- Partnered with a high-quality absorbent products manufacturer that supported best practices in care routines, provided training, clinical services, and staff support. Developed a standardized formulary.
- Created new protocols for staff on daytime & nighttime continence and skin care, which were aided by high-quality absorbent products specifically designed to hold multiple voids while protecting skin.
- Developed training on nighttime care interventions that promote quality, uninterrupted sleep.

### Established a new holistic care approach to continence management:

- Developed a new standardized absorbent products formulary, utilizing a selection of **Attends® high-quality, multi-void absorbent products from Domtar Personal Care, including: Attends® Advanced Briefs, Underwear, and Attends® Professional Care Washcloths** for perineal care.

This was to simplify and improve staff efficiencies in the areas of product ordering, management, and distribution — to achieve overall improved efficiencies with less waste.

- Implemented new nighttime incontinence care protocols for staff to realign care practices and promote quality, uninterrupted sleep for Residents.
- Trained staff on the nighttime management of incontinence with a quality assurance approach, to improve the quality of sleep and overall Resident Sleep Hygiene.
- Introduced a new skin care protocol for staff, supported by **Attends® Professional Care Washcloths**, for improved perineal care that was simple and effective with less waste.

*Benefits were documented almost immediately with the new care protocols and Attends® products.*



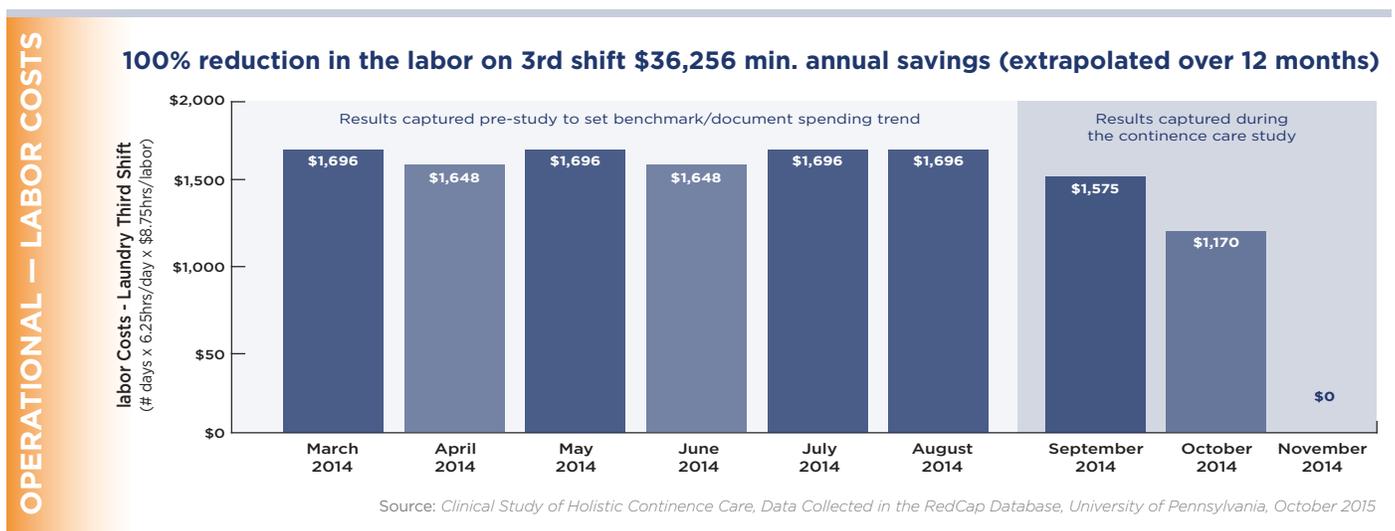
## KEY OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES

Increased staff satisfaction with Attends® high-quality, multi-void absorbent products, the care interventions and program implemented, and the overall improvements to the working environment and community.

- Training on the care protocols and interventions led to improved incontinence care overall and improved in-house staff development programs. Staff reported better understanding of the importance of implementing nighttime incontinence care interventions as a consistent program and saw clear benefits with Residents and the overall environment of the facility, i.e., “quieter nights,” which provided a more restful environment that promoted Sleep Hygiene with uninterrupted periods of sleep and better quality of sleep for Residents.
- Eliminated inefficient and disruptive nighttime care practices and eliminated the need for cloth underpads to capture leakage on the beds. Using the **Attends® high-quality, multi-void absorbent products with advanced state-of-the-art absorbent technologies available ONLY from Domtar Personal Care** reduced/eliminated urine leakage, which kept Resident skin temperatures at a comfortable level, reduced staff time devoted to bed linen changes, and significantly reduced laundry costs.
- Reduced unnecessary staff time and improved efficiency by eliminating urine leakage, a common problem experienced with previous use of inaccurate product sizing and/or inappropriate absorbency.
- Decreased labor costs from the laundry department were achieved. Staff that formerly spent time managing laundry were able to be re-directed to perform other care duties supporting improved Resident care. Laundry staff were re-directed to other care areas, improving labor efficiency and overall total costs.

## KEY FINDINGS

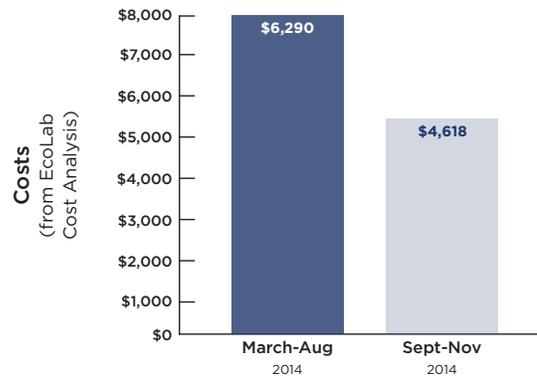
New care interventions reduced leakage and the need for laundry due to soiled bed linens; management was able to eliminate an entire shift formerly dedicated to laundry and redirect the labor hours. (see chart below and on adjacent page)



## OPERATIONAL LAUNDRY COSTS

Labor hours were **reduced** on the Third Shift laundry and re-directed to other care duties, with **savings achieved** through the newly implemented operational efficiencies.

**Laundry Costs decreased 33.7% as the cost of the required materials decreased.**



## CONCLUSION

Analysis of the data points from *The Clinical Study of Holistic Continence Care* concluded that Superior Care Home Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and its Residents realized multiple benefits that had immediate, far-reaching positive implications as a result of the continence care and Culture Change initiatives implemented during the study.

Results indicated that the new program of holistic care protocols and use of **Attends® high-quality, multi-void products**, combined with focused care interventions, decreased the overall costs associated with continence management and improved overall staff efficiencies.

While this approach may seem intimidating at first, it was shown that greater clinical and operational efficiencies can be achieved by working with the right plan and product partners. Superior Care's management team realized the value of partnering with **Domtar Personal Care, manufacturer of Attends® high-quality, multi-void products**. **Domtar Personal Care** was dedicated to supporting Superior Care's goals clinically and financially, so the facility could realize better outcomes and work together with **Domtar Personal Care** for long-term mutual success.

The study results proved that when new clinical and assessment practices were implemented and combined with a new formulary of **Attends® high-quality, multi-void products** — operational efficiencies increased, staff productivity and morale improved, and the total cost of care was reduced.

These results proved to management that implementing quality care outcomes clearly led to total cost and operational improvements and were well worth their time to oversee and establish, so Superior Care Home Nursing and Rehabilitation Center could realize continuous benefits and improved satisfaction for Residents, their families and staff.



## Get the Attends® Advantage™ and Be Positioned for SUCCESS!

Domtar Personal Care understands long term care economics and the constant pressures to perform with shrinking budgets. We partner with you to address top issues that tie into your financial, clinical and regulatory needs. Partner with us and our comprehensive menu of solutions, which support your staff in delivering effective, efficient care with improved outcomes. With Domtar Personal Care's clinical and business practices, we can customize our approach to suit each customer's situation and is continuously supported as we progress through our partnership.

This white paper outlines improvements and positive outcomes that can be achieved through implementation of a program as was undertaken in the Holistic Continence Care study. This study focused on the Culture Change improvements gained through implementation of new protocols for holistic continence care along with utilization of the **Attends® high-quality, multi-void products** in the course of the study.

For more information on this clinical study and the positive impact and results documented by Holistic Continence Care, ask your Domtar Personal Care Representative for copies of our additional two white papers.

For more information, please email: [BetterOutcomes@Attends.com](mailto:BetterOutcomes@Attends.com).

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