# How to do it...
# Smartwatch compliance

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Like many other aspects of society, smart technologies are sweeping senior living. The benefits of smart watches make them attractive additions in most facilities. Experts, however, advise careful evaluation of the pros and cons before making an initial plunge.

**1 Smartwatches can** provide a measure of reassurance for both relatives and community staff as part of a broader senior living platform, says Mike Webster, director of senior living for STANLEY Healthcare.

"Linking the data collected from a smart watch to a family application can provide peace of mind with the ability to view vital signs, receive alerts and notifications, and send messages," Webster explains. Strategically placed ADL activity tags can be used in conjunction with the devices to monitor for deviations in day-to-day activities, he adds.

For staff, the devices can be a big component of enhanced telehealth efforts and remote patient monitoring. Thanks to updates to the 2019 Physician Fee Schedule and Quality Payment Program, which included three new CPT codes for reimbursement of remote patient monitoring, "investments in technology to support RPM services can yield a significant [return on investment] for senior living operators."

Elopement prevention is a major benefit. Severe dementia and Alzheimer's residents in institutional memory care units typically benefit most from the use of RFID (radio frequency identification), while RF beacons and systems that leverage GPS, cellular triangulation and geo-fencing are geared more toward individuals with moderate and milder cogni-

tive decline who are still living in the community, adds Majd Alwan, Ph.D., senior vice president of technology for LeadingAge and executive director of the Center for Aging Services Technologies.

One of the devices' most recognized benefits — automatic fall detection and emergency calling capability — are highly suitable for frail residents at high risk of falling, says Alwan, whose CAST staff evaluates and provides information on a wide array of senior living technologies.

**2 Careful and thoughtful** planning are needed to successfully implement the use of smart watches on a facility- or community-wide scale.

Alwan advises going forward with implementation as long as staff ensure devices are actually being worn and know how to locate the devices if they aren't. Residents and staff also need to understand what various device alerts mean, and methods must be in place to stay vigilant on device battery charging. The watches also should integrate smoothly with existing systems like nurse call systems.

**3 Adoption and compliance** are critical for the success of any implementation.

Alwan encourages managers to ensure residents are convinced of the value of the smart watch. Good adoption tactics include

group gamification exercises, complemented by staff training and education.

STANLEY's Webster strongly urges engaging family when introducing smart watches.

"National averages suggest that the amount of time residents interact with caregivers is less than three hours per day," he says. "Stats like this should be used to educate residents and families about the value offered by smart watch capabilities when a caregiver is not present."

Various tactics can be used to drive compliance, including on-wrist charging capabilities and choosing smart watches that are water- and sweat-proof.

**4 Be mindful of major** caveats behind smart watches, experts advise.

"We do not recommend that smart watches be used for life safety applications such as fall detection, wander prevention

### Mistakes to avoid

- Choosing "feature-rich" over targeted benefits. Today's smartwatches can confound even techies.

- Neglecting the research. Some experts say fall detection and elopement apps can be buggy. Batteries and costs are other key concerns.

- Failing to engage staff, residents and family members. Involve users early to avoid costly compliance problems down the road.

and emergency call," says Brenda Gallenberger-Klumb, director of marketing and corporate communications at RF Technologies. "Our testing shows that fall detecting apps on these types of devices are unreliable, generating a high false alarm rate and missing some types of falls altogether."

She adds that emergency call capability is reliant on the quality of the cellular connection and availability of the cloud.

Smart watches also can act like battery "vampires."

"Any life-safety application is dependent on the resident, or a staff member, remembering to keep the battery charged at all times," says Gallenberger-Klumb, who bemoans that her own smart watch "goes dead on me two-to-three times a week."

She adds that Wi-Fi connections tend to drain watch batteries more slowly than cellular connections.

There are security concerns such as device theft and information privacy. Experts say voice-activated features on smart phones are currently not HIPAA compliant.

"They should not be used to collect privileged health information," says Gallenberger-Klumb.

Finally, experts advise facilities to responsibly mine the data devices generate.

"Simply collecting data will not improve the quality of care," says Webster. "The true opportunity for smart senior living is the broader IoT platform that aggregates the data collected by a smart watch or other connected device to drive the insights that can help seniors live longer in a home environment and help caregivers improve care."

— *John Hall*