

## Growing the Good: Life Care Services Keeps Seniors Safe but Social

**DAVE CASPER:** Welcome to Growing the Good. I'm Dave Casper, head of BMOs, North American commercial banking business. We're working with our customers to help them through this incredibly volatile time. They're stepping up in so many ways, helping to keep commerce moving, and keep people safe. I have the pleasure of speaking with a number of CEOs running businesses in a variety of industries, hearing their personal stories about the challenges they're facing, and some of the very innovative ways they've adapted in these uncertain times. Today, I'm speaking with Joel Nelson, President and CEO of life care services out of the Moines, Iowa. So Joel, thanks, again, for joining. I really appreciate it. Life Care Services is one of the largest Senior Living companies in the United States. But for our audience, can you give a little more description about the business you do and the types of services you provide?

**JOEL NELSON:** Certainly, Dave, and, and as you state, we are a very large company in the in the senior living space. And today, we are the second largest operator. But But what's what's more interesting about the company is, you know, we're approaching our 50 year mark. So we have a long history, the company is employee owned, and is solely senior centric. So what I mean by that is, we have a family of six companies. And all we do is get up every morning to think how we can serve and care for the seniors that live in our communities, or considering one of our communities as our future home. So in those six companies, we really try to cover the gamut of development. We have a development company that develops new Senior Living communities, reposition Senior Living communities, expansions, and so forth. And then we have a management company that oversees what the industry would refer to the rental retirement or senior living communities. We have a real estate company, and we have a procurement company that helps assist the management and the development to bring efficiencies to those those communities that we serve. And then in times, like we're experiencing here today, with with the pandemic, we're real blast and thankful for having a risk management and insurance company. And then lastly, within the family of six, we have a home health company and that is, is playing into the increased and expanded services through home health with the pandemic with with all of the telehealth that's needed during these times where where we're not always able to have face to face care.

**DAVE CASPER:** When we think about it, your facilities, the residents in your facilities are probably the most vulnerable age group around tell us what you've done. Tell us what's going on across all the communities to keep everybody safer.

**JOEL NELSON:** Yeah, that's a that's a great question, Dave. And, and the list is long. And if I if I said it very short, succinctly, I think we've we've probably touched on reinventing almost every single area of where we touch and serve the seniors and, and where we, we employ and train and develop, you know,

over 30,000 employees within our portfolio. But with this recent situation, in the pandemic it is we're in a vulnerable age bracket, but we also have, you know, all the employees that have to take and require an extra layer of precaution and, and, and safety. And so, you know, back in February, when we heard this was forthcoming, it literally required a pivot in almost every area of service and delivery.

**DAVE CASPER:** The social interaction is so important, how are you being flexible to make sure that the seniors where they have some social interaction and communication with their loved ones, especially those that don't live there? What are you doing that may or may not be different than others?

**JOEL NELSON:** I'm most proud I think of just the approach to transparency and communication that we've had with those residents and their families, their loved ones and their friends, etc. But deploying new means of technology certainly has been part of it. Whether you know, we've had many of us in the work world today and we're on zoom calls every day, but there's been a whole new training curriculum on getting the residents connected not only with their families, but our staff as well. And, and so I think along those lines, we've continued to look for ways in I'll give you an example that's very current as we recognize it's probably not in the best interest of the families and all of our residents to have the big Thanksgiving and holiday dinners and parties that we have in all of our communities, with everybody there, but there may be an approach. Our approach is Thanksgiving may not be on Thanksgiving Day for certain families. But if we can, we can accommodate those families and limited and have those activities throughout the day, multiple days forward before and after Thanksgiving. It doesn't miss the event in its entirety. The one thing we are blessed with in our communities, we might have an excess of 500 residents at one community, what comes with that is the good and the bad, it's a lot more common space and a lot more infection control. But it also allows us to social distance in those large Commons areas, that some of the smaller communities just simply may not have the extra space to be able to accommodate. So those are really kind of the areas. I think, as we're evolving into this phase, the more testing we have available, the more freedom we'll have with opening up because if we can get rapid testing results. And we know we're in a COVID free environment that allows great greater, you know, flow through the communities with guests and family members and staff. But the one people like the most Dave is, we went from several dining venues will typically have two to three restaurants and a community to putting all that on wheels, including the bar every day, those meals were delivered to the residents with the full services if they chose to participate in it choose to have a cocktail or a glass of wine with their dinner that evening that was also made available to, so it's its creativity and keeping the positive connection between our staff and our residents is really what's made the difference.

**DAVE CASPER:** Drinks on wheels always make the meals taste better. I've noticed, at least in our house. Yeah, Joel, I really appreciate hearing your story and the work that Life Care Services is doing to better serve seniors and their families. Thanks again for your time. Have a great day. Thanks for listening to growing the good. I hope you'll join me again for another conversation. Until then, stay safe.