



## **University of Cincinnati College of Nursing and Maple Knoll Communities Academic-Practice Partnership Overview**

This unique partnership between a university and retirement community is a foreshadowing of what the future brings as we experience a growing population of older adults that need care. Every month, more than a quarter million Americans turn 65. Ohio ranks 6th in the nation in the sheer size of this age population and Ohio's 85 and over population will triple in the next 30 years to reach 650,000.

For over 30 years, The University of Cincinnati (UC) and Maple Knoll (MK) Communities, a non-profit, continuum of services provider dedicated to supporting older adults so they can live happy, healthy and active lives in retirement, have worked together in nursing, medical, and pharmacy education and practice through innovative, holistic residential and community-based programs that improve the quality of life and respond to individuals' changing needs as they age.

Maple Knoll Village is one of the three retirement communities owned and operated by MK Communities. It offers 143 villas, 125 apartments, 62 assisted living apartments and a 145-bed skilled nursing facility with a hospice center and rehabilitation center. It is also the headquarters for outreach programs and services for older adults living in their homes. Through its outreach services to support homebound senior citizens throughout the community, as well as home health and hospice services, MK Communities have a wide footprint in the older adult community in the Greater Cincinnati.

In 2012, MK Communities was chosen as the UC CON's partner to create an Innovation Collaboratory Smart House to realize the college's vision for service to older adults. The Smart House, a MKV villa transformed into a learning and test environment for the development of technologies aimed at keeping seniors in their own homes or communities longer, acted as a catalyst for interprofessional opportunities that include the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS), the College of Medicine, and the College of Allied Health, in addition to the CON.

The Smart House has enabled the CON to incorporate remote presence robots into student courses and community-based settings, ensuring workforce readiness during the transformation of health care delivery. It is also home to telehealth robots and patient simulators and is now the testing ground for innovative student projects aimed at detecting falls, preventing medication errors and making life easier for an aging population. The UC CON has engaged the community in innovative technological projects that provide student competency-based learning and improve care provision in the future.

In May of 2014, leadership and decision makers from both organizations gathered to identify necessary steps to move forward with a formal affiliation, as well as specific goals that each side would like to see accomplished. In April 2015, the two organizations officially joined forces and finalized a formal affiliation that continues to bring both UC and MKC to the forefront of telehealth and health care technology.

A formal Affiliation Board, comprised of four individuals from each organization – including the CON’s Dean Greer Glazer and Dr. Debi Sampsel as ex-officio members – was created to further the progress of the relationship. Since then, the House and various other projects continue to bridge care delivery throughout the MK campus and now into MK’s Senior HUD housing complexes. The sustained, expansion of the partnership throughout time has always been purposeful. Every year, stakeholders and board members meet to reevaluate the strategic plan and fine next steps. The Smart House serves as a foundation of learning and evolution of better ways to serve our students and older adults.

To date, nearly 3000 nursing students and 400 Maple Knoll residents have been impacted by the partnership. The affiliation allows UC to develop and test technology aimed at creating environments that can improve physical and mental status through self-care and independence. This collaboration benefits both the residents and the students through intergenerational sharing of history, technology, and care-coping skills. Maple Knoll also serves as an incubator for students' innovations and inventions to be tested and evaluated before launching them in real life settings. Residents are not only getting firsthand knowledge of changes in healthcare but they are receiving access to care in a way they never dreamed possible.