



Supporting What Matters Most - How Sapphire Health Services Leverages GPO Partnership to Fulfill Their Mission of Comprehensive Care

The Challenge

As Sapphire expanded from 1 community in 2011 to 26 in 2022, in the years that followed its purchasing complexity grew exponentially. The business growth accelerated when Kevin Ricker, brought on strategic partners including Andy Becker, Bryan Morris, and Lisa Hilty, recognizing the need for expanded expertise to support the expansion.

With ambitious growth plans and momentum building, the leadership team knew they needed to partner with a GPO that could deliver the strong purchasing power to match their big goals—a strategic decision that led to their exploration of Incite. **"You have different purchasing power when you're a smaller player than when you have a large footprint,"** Lisa Hilty recalls. **"We wanted the bandwidth and purchasing power of a larger organization."**

Three pain points drove the search for a better partner, beginning with long-standing procurement challenges that were later compounded by unprecedented market disruptions:

Purchasing Scale & Fair Pricing – Small and mid-size operators struggle to obtain the same foodservice, medical-supply and insurance rates that national chains command.

Pandemic Supply-Chain Shocks – Personal protective equipment (PPE) costs for long-term-care providers surged by an estimated \$30 billion in 2020 alone, creating "unprecedented financial issues" for senior living operators nationwide. Those shortages forced facilities to "get what you need at whatever cost," as Hilty explained.

Workforce & Specialized Care Needs – COVID-19 disrupted an already acute staffing crisis in Oregon's long-term-care sector - agency utilization doubled and labor costs soared. Meanwhile, Sapphire's decision to launch high-acuity programs (ventilator care, traumatic brain injury) demanded reliable access to niche supplies and clinical expertise. The company's willingness to tackle programs others shy away from meant they needed a GPO partner who could support specialized procurement needs.

Incite's Solution: A Mission-Aligned GPO Relationship

Sapphire became one of Incite's inaugural members, drawn by a team comprised of industry leaders and veterans with deep senior living expertise. Incite is a senior living focused GPO that pairs national purchasing leverage with hands-on account teams staffed by industry experts. Its model emphasizes dedicated "Member Success Managers," robust analytics and a growing workforce-solutions arm. The company is the endorsed GPO partner of the Oregon Health Care Association (OHCA), giving members access to statewide vendor contracts and advocacy.

"I could call them at any moment and ask for support, help, guidance, whatever it might be, and I knew we'd be treated well, which positioned us to scale and grow effectively while maintaining our mission focus," Hilty says.

Key Outcomes for Sapphire

Savings & Pricing Parity

The purchasing power Sapphire sought became immediately apparent in contract savings. Leveraged contracts delivered immediate reductions in unit costs, from food staples to respiratory disposables, helping Sapphire reinvest dollars into care programs. Industry research shows GPO bulk purchasing typically shaves 10–15 percent off input costs for senior living communities. Hilty credits Incite with "standardizing" Sapphire's leverage so the company "has the same attention and pricing regardless of our size."

Supply-Chain Resilience

While PPE prices rose nationwide, Sapphire maintained continuity of care without paying black-market premiums. "Having a strong partner during the pandemic was critical," Hilty says. The stability mirrored AHCA's call for permanent supply-chain support to long-term-care providers.

Accelerated Clinical Innovation

Reliable procurement underpinned several first-in-state or region expansions, including the ventilator and trach unit that enabled post-acute ventilator patients to stay in Oregon rather than transfer to out-of-state facilities. Three strategically located traumatic brain injury communities allow residents to remain close to home while receiving specialized care. Home-grown workforce solutions emerged as savings and guidance freed capital to launch an internal staffing agency and a CNA training school, reducing reliance on temp labor, as well as supporting state workforce goals.

The company also expanded through strategic partnerships, including a joint venture hospice company and acquisition of a home care business serving Bend, Eugene, and Portland.

Cultural & Strategic Fit

Hilty emphasises the "shoulder-to-shoulder" ethos: "They hired experts in our field ... that combination meant I could call and know our needs wouldn't be lost." The relationship extends beyond price to thought partnership on regulation, vendor vetting and quality metrics.

Looking Forward: Continued Mission-Driven Growth

With supply chains stabilized, Sapphire now prioritizes "best product at the best price, with the best service." The company and Incite jointly evaluate vendors for on-time delivery, fill-rate accuracy and clinical quality, ensuring resources continue flowing toward their mission of serving complex care populations.

Future collaboration areas include data-driven category management to fine-tune formularies, sustainable workforce pipelines leveraging Incite's growing labor-solutions platform for hard-to-fill roles, and regulatory readiness as Oregon implements staffing-agency rate caps and new CMS staffing ratios.

Quote from Leadership

“ Pick your GPO partner wisely. Who's going to understand your profession, and advocate for your best outcomes, and best pricing? It matters - and that's why we've chosen Incite. ”



Lisa Hilty,
President & COO

