Photo: J. Brasch Company

Fall management

Snapshot

Pricing based on number of people to protect:
Product, vendor and service-term variances mean wide ranges.
Be aware of potential monthly charges.

Average price per resident per year:
Depending on system complexity, costs could start from roughly $75 to $500 or more. Some option-rich systems could cost $2,000 or more.

Typical delivery time: Some items can be delivered overnight, others take 1 to 2 months.

Typical delivery charges:
Standard shipping costs

Average life span of product:
Bed and chair pads differ so much, the span could be from a month to 8 or 10 years.

Power sources:
Battery, hardwired electric

Installation:
Because so many are virtually plug-and-play, staff members should be able to enact.

Average maintenance costs per year:
Pad changes up to five times a year. Battery types will vary. Inquire with the vendor about specs.

Buyers Notes

• Software and its reporting capabilities have come a long way in recent years, so inquire as to their full capabilities. Make sure that staff tries them out, too, before buying. If staff considers a system too complicated, they'll either not use it or not use it to its full capability.

• Know whether a system will track staff responsiveness. Some systems "self-audit" who responds, and how quickly, which can be vital to know later.

• Parts life can play a big role in how well liked (and used) these systems are. Check with current customers about change-outs.

"Look for passive monitoring abilities. One you want has prescreening and predictive abilities so you can intervene early. Passive monitoring can be in any environment, and now with Wi-Fi, it's not so expensive for installation."

— Michelle Glass, Corporate Vice President, Bethesda Southgate, St. Louis

(Figures cited are averages of all respondents' answers. Actual pricing will vary due to volume, bundling and other factors of a purchase.)

Sources: *J. Brasch Company, Philips Lifeline, Sensara, Skynet Healthcare Technologies, STANLEY Healthcare Solutions*