

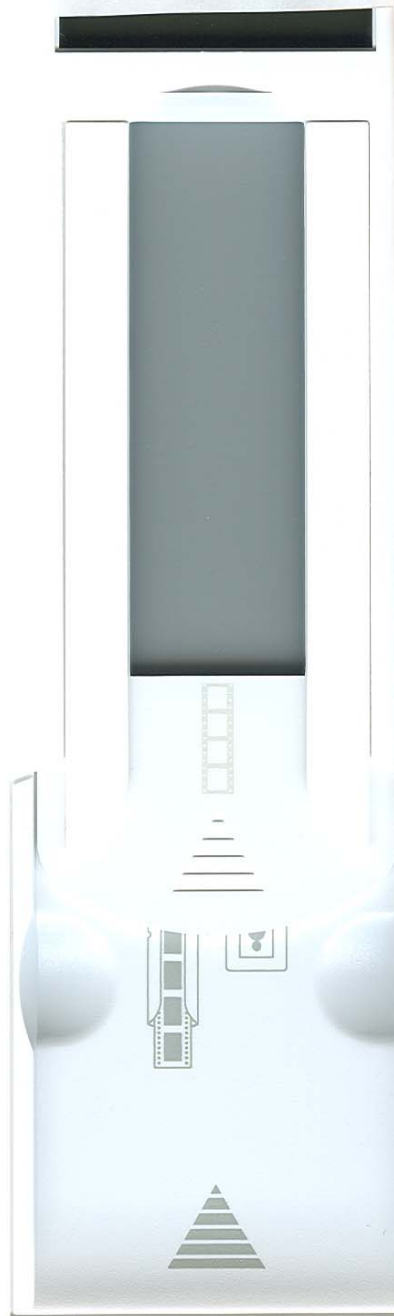
“Those [surveyors] who have seen it have been very impressed.”

Families have less anxiety about visiting, notes Sciacca: “Families, when they come to visit, have a much better, more productive visit, because they’re seeing positive things happening with their loved one.” But even

beyond this, the program has improved census. “People are raving [about] it; we don’t have enough rooms for people who want their loved ones to be in the program,” she adds. “The units had census issues when we bought the buildings, but now all of our buildings are full and the units

now have waiting lists. From a marketing standpoint, it’s a very positive environment to walk onto the unit.”

Furthermore, the private-pay census has increased on those units, Sciacca states: “We’ve found that a lot of geriatric care managers are referring their patients to us.” And to top it all off, the program isn’t costly. “One aide on the unit is the Namaste aide, and if 12 to 15 people are in the Namaste Care room, that’s her assignment plus,” she says. “We spent a little money on the room and on recliners, but nothing of significance. It certainly has paid for itself,” Sciacca adds.



A baby's touch comforts and cheers.



A stuffed animal brings a smile to a resident's face.

“For me as an administrator, to see [the Namaste Care program] work is a godsend,” says Alpern. “No one’s sitting around in chairs with nothing to do. It makes me proud that we’ve done the right thing by our residents.” ■

Kathleen Lourde is an independent writer based in Dacoma, Oklahoma. For more information about the Namaste program, visit www.joycesimard.com, and about EPOCH Senior Living, www.epochs.com. To send your comments to the author and editors, e-mail lourde0507@nursinghomesmagazine.com.