

0:41 - 1:21

Lucas McCurdy

Welcome to Bridge Gap podcast, the senior living podcast with Josh and Lucas. We've got a great guest returning friend of the program. Welcome. Amy Peters, VP of conference meetings and events at Mic. Welcome back to the show.

Amy Peters

I am thrilled to be here with you.

Lucas McCurdy

We are thrilled that you're here. And the last podcast we did together, we had to do it virtually, and now we get to be in person. And it's so great to meet you. And by the way, you did an amazing job at the last conference. You really had a lot. You gave us a lot of promises, and y'all really delivered in Austin, Texas. It worked out really well.

Amy Peters

You got your barbecue?

Lucas McCurdy

I got my barbecue. I got my tacos. I was a happy camper.

01:21 - 01:59

Lucas McCurdy

Oh, it's a wonderful event, a great town, a great venue. So I echo that it was a wonderful time. Well, and you know, Josh, we're not here to talk about Austin. We're here to talk about which is my home state. Now we're going to your home state.

Josh Crisp

That's right.

Nashville, Tennessee. That's right, I can't wait. It's just a short drive from my home. I usually go all over the place for NIC, which is worth it. But Music City Center, here we come. It's an answer to my prayers. I have been saying for years and years and years. Why does NIC not go to Nashville, Tennessee? And now you're finally there?

Amy Peters

I think this is the first time. It is our first time, and it's just it's so synergistic, right?

01:59 - 03:04

Amy Peters

Healthcare capital of the US. Fantastic city. Great airlift. We're going to have great weather. It's just a win-win.

Lucas McCurdy

So for our listeners, we're talking about the Spring Conference. It's going to be in Nashville, Tennessee. And this is the intersection of where senior housing meets care. And as you said, Nashville is a great spot for that. There's going to be a very robust program. The spring conference is always very well attended. Nick does an amazing job with the curriculum, the meetings, and the venue. So, Amy, give us a little bit of a deep dive here on some of these topics. We're going to go over, you know, affordability, regulatory environment and labor.

You know, start us off with a place that you think it's it's good for our listeners, kind of starting point.

Amy Peters

Let's talk about affordability. Sure. Let's tee that up right now. You know, we are facing unprecedented growth, unprecedented demand. How are we going to meet it? What are our options? So we have a session on Tuesday titled Residential Care Reimagined: The Rise of Small Homes.

03:04 - 04:21

Amy Peters

We're so excited to be giving this topic a mainstage session. We've got the heads of Sage Oak, Assured Senior Living, and WellPoint all on stage to talk about this model, where they are responding to the consumer, they are providing more supply, and they are providing something affordable. The speakers are talking about a model that is also scalable. And when they're talking about meeting the consumer, they're talking about not only the residents but the families as well, because they have very, very consistent staffing and universal staffing, which leads to a great degree of comfort for their residents and wonderful, wonderful outcomes.

And they're going to talk about funding specifically. They have been working with HUD for financing as well. So it is going to be an absolutely fantastic session.

Lucas McCurdy

That's really interesting.

Josh Crisp

Yeah. Well, it's very interesting. And you're right, there has been a lot of talk about new funding methods, new opportunities that will help developer-owner operators be able to make these emerging models possible. And you know, NIC is not only a great opportunity to network. I think that's what so many people talk about, but to learn together and talk about the emerging trends and to find out what's working for people and what's coming down the pike with the capital markets.

Lucas McCurdy

So, let's talk about the regulatory environment. What does NIC have on deck for us there?

04:21 - 06:08

Amy Peters

Well, we have got five for-profit and not-for-profit state association leaders coming to talk with us. We've got California, Georgia, Minnesota, Ohio, and Oregon, talking about navigating state regulatory and Medicaid waiver models. So business is good. We know there are great opportunities for assisted living to expand. But we also know that we want operators and investors to know the questions they're going to have to ask when they're going into a new state.

Yes, there are consistencies, and the five speakers will be talking about that. There are some very broad brush strokes between the regulatory and Medicaid waiver information. But there are definitely some variables and nuances that are going to be critical for these operators and investors to understand. So, that's what we want to do. We want it to be a great teaching experience where the five panelists are kind of not saying one state or one model is better than the other, but they want to just give a broad look at what it can be like. So just to spark some ideas, and they're going to try and address what may happen with the one Big Beautiful Bill.

Josh Crisp

Well, that's really interesting. And I think it's such an important conversation because you pointed out every state is slightly different. So not only for entering new states, operators entering new territory rub shoulders and talk about those challenges and opportunities in those states. But, I mean, with all these emerging models, regulation has to change and adapt to that. So by working together and kind of understanding that together, I think that really helps to foster the change that we'll need in the regulatory environment. So great. Another great topic. So, Amy, there's another exciting opportunity for the attendees at the next event in Nashville.

06:08 - 08:35

Josh Crisp

And it's about the CMS and all those changes that are coming out. And you're going to have an awesome discussion, there will be able to hear all the attendees. I believe it's a general session, so tell us all about that.

Amy Peters

Oh, thank you so much for asking. So CMS has been making unprecedented forays, overtures to senior housing. Right. They recognize us, they see us. They want to understand how we can all work together in this ecosystem for better health outcomes. So we are going to give our attendees an opportunity to hear directly from Carrie Baker, who is the chief strategy officer of the CMS Innovation Center, formerly CME. We've been seeing a lot of models released.

We've got elevate, we've got access, we have teams, we have lead and listen. They're great. They're fascinating. But it's one thing to read a press release or see a nice little summary that NIC puts out. It's another thing entirely to hear it directly from him, to talk about what this impact can be and how we can work together.

Josh Crisp

Well, that's a very, very unique opportunity and of itself, and worth the value of admission just for that alone. So how do you think our industry is going to respond to that with curiosity?

Amy Peters

I think with healthy curiosity, because there's a lot that still hasn't been defined. One of the new models that was just released talked about how they are excluding frail individuals over the age of 81. Fine. That's your prerogative. How are you going to define frail, Federal Government? They don't know yet. So we're hoping that this is going to be more of a dialogue where we can have more of a seat at the table, make our needs known, and understand.

Just understand what the federal government is looking for, understand what the data is that they're looking for, to make sure that what we are collecting and what we are ready to share is in sync with their needs. Well, what a great opportunity to showcase senior housing. None other, better opportunity than that, NIC. And I'm so thankful that they're actually asking the questions and they're leaning in to our industry, on the way to 2030, and this huge demographic. And I think it shows that they see senior housing as a great solution and a great opportunity to help our aging population.

Josh Crisp

So, just another opportunity at NIC Lucas.

Lucas McCurdy

Yeah. And another big topic, as the senior housing industry is really, the momentum has shifted and is very optimistic. And there's always going to be a fight for good talent.

08:35 - 11:16

Lucas McCurdy

We need good caregivers. You know, you might even call that the labor force. What does Nick have on deck for us there?

Amy Peters

Glad you asked. We recognized that staffing, recruiting, and retaining top talent at that local level is critical, right? It's the lifeblood of doing what we do well. So we're going to have a breakout session titled Incentivizing and Retaining Your Property Level leaders.

And we are going to have two CEOs from NHC, from National Health Care Corporation, and from Hawthorne Senior Living talking about what they are doing very successfully. And this is not just recruit and burnout. And replace, right? That's not a model that's sustainable. So they want to talk about these proven models that are ownership structure aligned. We want compensation designs that property-level leaders buy into because they have a vested interest in outcomes. So you know, we're talking about strengthening culture. We're talking about building a more resilient workforce, but we're also talking about as resident outcomes and better financial performance.

Josh Crisp

Well, so with all of those, are there, I mean, there's always so much packed end, NIC. And it's so good for our listeners to kind of know so they can begin to plan. But what are some other nuances this year that you're packing into the event that people maybe haven't heard about yet?

Amy Peters

Well, you know, we do have our usual great networking opportunities. That's always there. We've got wonderful receptions. We have wonderful niche groups that are meeting, you know, our women's networking. We have first timers networking. Actually. Gentlemen, can I talk first timers for a moment? Yeah, yeah, we would actually love to talk about that because we were just talking about even at the events we've been to recently, it seems like so many new emerging faces, and that's great growth for our industry. So what do you have there? Right.

We are specifically recruiting a lot of first timers, and the feedback we have gotten on our post conference surveys has been, gosh, it's great. It's completely overwhelming. And I get it right. You walk into NIC, there are 2003 thousand people that almost everybody feels like they know each other. Everybody's hugging. And then somebody walks up to me and says, well, where's the trade show floor?

Okay, we always send information out. There's a first-timers video, there's a website, there's a first-timers welcome reception, but we're going to do something different this year. I personally am going to email every person who tells me they're a first timer, going to get an email from me. I'm going to give you a checklist, make sure you read and look at everything, and then I want you to email me with questions. I'm going to be a first timers concierge. Now I'm putting myself out there.

Josh Crisp

Wow.

Lucas McCurdy

Are you going to be able to sleep? How are you doing this?

Amy Peters

You know, sleep is for amateurs.

11:16 - 14:17

Lucas McCurdy

Well, that's huge. That's really, really big. And I know, you know, I have to think back many, many years I've been attending NIC, 15 plus years. I don't know how many years you've been in for at least 20. And I do remember how overwhelming it was to attend that first time. And so, having a resource like that for such a prestigious organization, an event like the spring, NIC is going to be huge.

Amy Peters

You know, we just want to give people that opportunity to prepare in advance because I think that's probably what trips up most of our first timers, is they kind of show up and say, how can I meet with so-and-so? I'm like, oh, I'm sorry. Their schedule was booked a month ago, right? So now we're going to give them a much longer on-ramp, and they're going to be far more successful.

Josh Crisp

Yeah, well, it's a huge investment. I remember as a young person I really appreciated my mentor who brought me into the business. Kind of showed me the ropes at NIC and made it. And what he said was an investment. Because there's a huge value proposition to attending NIC, and I learned something every year. Lucas and I have talked about this a lot.

And it's been such an awesome opportunity to be partnered with you guys and be able to share the stories and the operators that are there. I would like to know, like you guys, what a big impact on, I think not only first-time attendees, but people who are looking for a new career or their first career.

We've actually had people on our podcast who are in partnership, and they're working with NIC, and they come in as students from universities. Can you talk a little bit about that? How do you guys partner there?

Amy Peters

Yeah, absolutely. We've got a great University Scholar program. As a matter of fact, I just made sure that my alma mater was added to the list because it wasn't already on there. It's a sponsored event, and these students get to attend for free. And, we've got people that obviously we're trying to grow in the workforce, and they're coming from a lot of different areas. We have the finance people. We have marketing people. The thing that prompted me to talk about my alma mater was hospitality and restaurant management, that kind of major.

So we're looking to everybody that our whole point is grow the industry, grow the talent. And so you kind of think you start there as a university scholar, then you get involved in NIC and then you can apply perhaps for the prestigious Future Leaders Council. And we're trying to make sure that there are growth opportunities at every stage.

Josh Crisp

Well, it's been encouraging to me, about once a year, I get the opportunity to talk to 1 or 2 universities, their senior classes. And about ten years ago, I would go speak to the universities, and very few of them even knew what senior housing was. They didn't understand it. And then now, you know, the current, I'll go and talk, and people are actually talking about it.

So I think whatever we're doing as an industry is starting to work, and people are realizing that no matter what skill set they have or what passion they're chasing, what they're being educated in, there's probably an application to that in our industry. So what a great opportunity you guys are providing Nick for that as well. Lucas, I mean, I'm excited.

14:17 - 16:17

Josh Crisp

This is just around the corner.

Lucas McCurdy

It is it's coming up quick. And you know what? It was very interesting. As many years as I've attended NIC, you've attended Nick. It's hard for me to believe that there are somebody out there who doesn't know about the NIC conference. But occasionally I do run across those folks. And actually, last week I was on a phone call with someone in the DFW marketplace.

They had a development that somehow they had found me online and wanted to pick my brain about it. And I said, in the conversation, I told them, I said Are y'all attending Spring NIC? And they didn't know what Nick was. And it was a great opportunity for me to explain to them that they had the right guy on the phone to explain it to them.

And so, what is, for those that are listening, that may not know what NIC is? Because I'll send this episode to that guy. Right. Explain to people out there why they would attend NIC? They would attend NIC because it is a gathering place for the entire industry, right?

Amy Peters

We are trying to be all things to all people. And sometimes we hit, sometimes we miss. But listen, we've got 70% of our attendees are C-suite senior level. We've got very committed people. So great opportunities to meet with people who are seasoned and are willing to be mentors. And it is a mixture of people who want to get education, who want to make new contacts, and who want to get in touch with old contacts.

So that's really our goal is we're trying to always look to that mission of the conference. As a matter of fact, it's something we survey every single time. That's our gap analysis of these things that you say you were here for. How important were they? How did we do in solving that need? So that's kind of our bright star.

So yeah, I mean, and obviously, we are looking for more women to attend. We're hovering around 22 or 25%. So we're always hoping to get just that little bit more. We've got an incredible women's networking gathering planned. We are a music city, and that's all the more I can say about it, because it's going to be a surprise.

16:17 - 17:22

Josh Crisp

Oh. That's amazing. Well, you guys created such a wonderful event. Always look forward to the quality of what you put together. Not only the education, but the spaces are wonderful. The food

is amazing. I can't wait to be in Nashville. We're going to get lots of awesome music. There's no telling what kind of surprises you've got up your sleeve, so we can't wait to be there. Very, very soon.

Amy Peters

I appreciate that. We really do try to be authentically local in our programming, in our food, in our experience overall. Well, we recently experienced that a way too much in Austin, by the way. Lucas, we can't do that again. Yeah, well, I'm looking forward to Nashville.

Lucas McCurdy

Amy, thank you so much for your time today and for giving us this download.

Amy Peters

I appreciate it. Thanks for having me on.

Lucas McCurdy

Yes, yes. And so for those of you who want to learn more, scroll down to those show notes. Click the links to learn more about attending spring NIC. Go to btgvoice.com. Download this content. So much more. Thanks for listening to another great episode to bridge the gap. Thanks for listening to Bridge the Gap, a podcast dedicated to informing, educating, and influencing the future of housing and services for seniors.

Outro

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