

## The Garlands<sup>®</sup> of Barrington Creates Welcoming Community for Residents with GBAC STAR<sup>™</sup>

### Opportunity

The Garlands<sup>®</sup> of Barrington is a one-of-a-kind Life Plan community, embracing The Fine Art of Retirement.<sup>®</sup> The Garlands features 788,000 square feet of communal amenities, four restaurants, 14 hotel suites, over 260 independent living residences and 26 private villas, as well as 70 healthcare apartments. With 400 residents and over 300 employees, The Garlands of Barrington faced significant challenges at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Because residents are at a heightened risk of infection due to age and health concerns, nursing homes and long-term care facilities were some of the first facilities to feel the detrimental impact of the pandemic. It was critical for places like The Garlands of Barrington to take action immediately.

“When large groups of people live together in a community setting, there is an increased risk of infections spreading,” said Nancy McCaffrey, The Garlands of Barrington Director of Hospitality. “We asked ourselves, ‘How do we keep everyone safe? How do we balance the risk of the virus spreading while continuing to maintain our residents’ mental well-being?’”

### Solution



With protocols and policies already in place, The Garlands of Barrington felt prepared to handle the challenges that the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) presented. However, based on the rapid

spread of national news stories and the sudden spotlight on long-term living facilities, The Garlands of Barrington decided to take additional steps to assure its residents and their family members, as well as its staff, that they were doing everything they could to prevent the spread of infection.

“We felt we needed to find a means to validate our efforts and try to maintain confidence. And in some cases, rebuild confidence in our team members, especially those who live here, as well as their families and prospective members,” said McCaffrey.



**The Garlands<sup>®</sup> of Barrington  
Barrington, Ill.**

The Garlands sought guidance from The Global Biorisk Advisory Council<sup>™</sup> (GBAC), a Division of ISSA, through its GBAC STAR<sup>™</sup> Facility Accreditation program. As the cleaning industry’s only outbreak prevention, response, and recovery accreditation, successful GBAC STAR facilities can effectively demonstrate that the correct practices, procedures, and systems are in place to clean and disinfect against infectious agents.

“Earning an accreditation from a third-party and professional organization supports our credibility when speaking about the efforts made by our team in working to keep a safe environment,” added McCaffrey. “Elaborating on who the people are behind the accreditation and the connection to ISSA provided us with additional assurance.”

### Results



After completing the GBAC STAR program, The Garlands of Barrington received formal accreditation, resulting in numerous benefits:

**Enhanced sense of pride among residents.** For many already living in long-term care facilities, as well as concerned family members, the first several months of the pandemic brought an increased sense of panic and fear. However, The Garlands of Barrington took the necessary

steps to provide residents and families with added assurance. “Those living here have a sense of pride in being the only community such as ours that has earned GBAC STAR accreditation so far,” said McCaffrey. “They are very grateful to all that has been done in regard to safety.”

**Increased employee morale and gratitude.** While many organizations saw an increase in furloughs and had to lay off employees, The Garlands of Barrington was able to shift gears to keep its entire staff throughout the pandemic. “While weekly housekeeping into members’ homes was paused due to the stay-at-home mandate early in the pandemic, allowing staff to enter only for mechanical or medical emergencies, we shifted our labor efforts,” said McCaffrey. Focusing on cleaning and disinfecting common spaces, staff regularly addressed all surfaces, disinfecting them three times per day and using an electrostatic disinfectant sprayer throughout the campus. “The reaction by staff was of gratitude. Instead of closing down services and laying off team members, we kept them employed and maintained the same level of safety as if we were fully open.”

**A competitive advantage in reaching prospective residents.** The Garlands of Barrington is the first and only retirement community in the nation to earn GBAC STAR accreditation. This created a major advantage in attracting new residents and those seeking a safe living space for their elderly family members. “Those considering moving here list the GBAC STAR accreditation in a category of what sets us apart. Prospective residents view this as an additional positive in their decision-making process in choosing a retirement community,” said McCaffrey.

**Better communication strategies.** Due to GBAC’s step-by-step program and guidance, leadership at The Garlands of Barrington could better communicate the “what” and “why” behind their cleaning and disinfecting methods to staff across all departments, as well as residents and guests. “It has been an additional resource to use in helping maintain compliance,” said McCaffrey. “When visitors or members have a different opinion on how to manage specific challenges related to the pandemic, we have been able to include GBAC STAR as part of the rationale for why we do what we do.”

Moving forward, the Garlands of Barrington has a positive outlook on the future and plans to renew its GBAC STAR accreditation each year. According to McCaffrey, “Our vision is to continue to build awareness among our community and to use GBAC STAR as a tool to educate members and staff in how to better assess risk and take action.”

**Visit our website at [GBAC.org](https://www.gbac.org)**

Contact us by phone at 1-800-225-4772 (North America)  
or 1-847-982-0800 (outside North America)

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—Nancy McCaffrey  
Director of Hospitality  
The Garlands of Barrington



## About GBAC, a Division of ISSA

Composed of international leaders in the field of microbial-pathogenic threat analysis, mitigation, response, and recovery, the Global Biorisk Advisory Council<sup>™</sup> (GBAC), a Division of ISSA, provides training, guidance, accreditation, certification, crisis management assistance and leadership to government, commercial, and private entities looking to mitigate, quickly address, and/or recover from biological threats and real-time crises. The organization’s services include biorisk management program assessment and training, infectious disease and biological material response and remediation, the GBAC STAR<sup>™</sup> Facility and Service Accreditation Programs, training and certification of individuals, and consulting for building owners and facility managers.