

A CASE STUDY

MOW Rowan Reduces Senior
Social Isolation and
Boosts Mental Health with Tablet
Tech in the Home



THE CHALLENGE

Staff members of Meals on Wheels Rowan knew, from the very beginning of the pandemic, that social isolation was going to be a big problem. Most of their homebound senior clients were self-isolating, and many weren't seeing their loved ones because of COVID-19.

So when MOW made the difficult decision to limit deliveries of frozen meals to only once a week, some clients suddenly had almost no contact with the outside world. Clients were telling Care Coordinators they were lonely. Clients appreciated the "Comfort Calls" each week but volunteers shared with staff that the calls were not enough for some clients.

As a result, the MOW staff started looking for a new, scalable way to help many of their clients who were lonely and stuck at home by helping them connect remotely with their loved ones, improve their mental health, and provide a way for staff to keep an eye on their wellbeing.



THE SOLUTION

After testing various platforms, Meals on Wheels selected Claris Companion®, an easy-to-use tablet and software solution specifically designed for older seniors. The senior-friendly interface, personalization capabilities, and security features made the Claris Companion Tablet ideal for their clients, many of whom had little experience with technology.



Key features include:

- Built-in 4G/LTE cellular internet service for seniors without access to WiFi
- An online dashboard where Care Coordinators could remotely set up and customize each tablet
- Easily configurable wellness checks, medication reminders, alerts, internet browsing, video calling, photo sharing, surveys, games, and more
- Claris Insight™, a component of the Claris Companion platform that tracks and makes it easy to visualize data on how clients are interacting with their tablets at home

IMPLEMENTATION

CARES Act funding paid for the tablets and first year of service. The tablets were delivered directly to clients.

In addition to preloaded apps and websites — which included the local senior center and local Public Library as well as the Libby library app — staffers personalized each device to reflect the client's interests. In some cases, that meant setting it up so clients could view online church services. For others, it meant bookmarking the website of a favorite sports team so they could check the scores with the push of a button.

Importantly, each senior's personal contact list was added to their device, so they could easily send messages or video chat with their loved ones, while also staying safe from phishing and online scams.

“After 3 months Claris Companion users reported a 30% decrease in depression symptoms, and a 20% increase in social interactions.”

Finally, the tablets were configured to survey the clients with automated wellness checks. These ranged from simple check-ins and health questionnaires, to cognitive tests, and social isolation surveys including the Lubben Social Isolation Scale (LSIS) and Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS).

If any of the responses raised concern, customized alerts prompted staff and personal contacts to follow up directly with the client to ensure everything was okay.

RESULTS

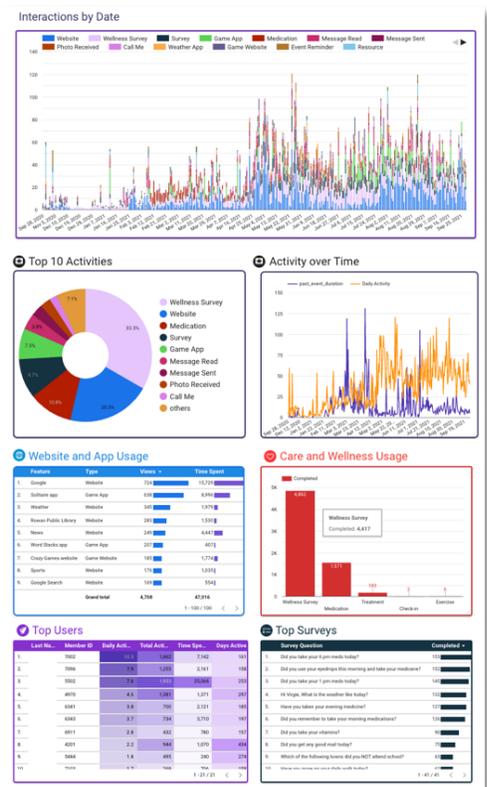
While onboarding assistance was provided by both Claris and MOW Rowan, seniors as old as 90 said they were able to start using their Claris Companion tablets right out of the box. Clients told Care Coordinators they liked interacting with the devices, with one woman saying it made her feel someone was checking in on her.

Surveys showed that clients' mental health improved after using the tablets. Three months into the pilot program, depression and social isolation surveys found a 30% decrease in depression symptoms, and a significant increase in social interactions.

Over the first 12 months, notable findings from Claris Insight™ built-in data analytics included more than:

- 11,400 total interactions on the tablet
- 47,000 minutes of content viewed
- 6,500 total wellness and mental health surveys
- 1,700 medication reminders
- 1,000 messages sent and received

Based on the pilot's success, Meals on Wheels Rowan obtained grant funds to expand the program and purchase additional tablets for more clients. The agency now plans to make Claris Companion a regular part of its core services.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jake Levy

jlevy@clarishealthcare.com

www.clariscompanion.com/enterprise