



Case Study: Arthritis Services Helps Clients Manage Pain and Improve Mobility with Claris Companion

THE CHALLENGE

In a normal year, Arthritis Services of Charlotte-Mecklenburg County serves more than 500 clients with in-person exercise and physical therapy classes. These programs act as a lifeline for adults and seniors with arthritis and chronic pain, with participants typically reporting improved pain levels, mobility, overall fitness, and mood.

But when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it brought these classes to a halt. Staff knew many clients would suffer setbacks in their mental and physical health without access to their regular movement classes and other programs.

In response, Arthritis Services quickly began looking for a solution that would help their clients connect online with case workers, despite many clients not having their own smartphones, tablets, or computers.



THE SOLUTION

Arthritis Services decided that they needed to purchase not only the tablet hardware for their clients to access classes and programs online, but also needed to have:

- An accessible and intuitive user interface for older seniors with arthritis.

- Remote management of all the devices from a central online dashboard.
- Data analytics to ensure their clients were getting the most out of the online services.
- Implementation and training services to ensure their staff were able to get the most out of the technology.

- 56% increased their physical fitness.
- 39% improved ADLs
- 33% less lonely and isolated.
- 31% reduction in perceived pain.

After a careful evaluation period, Arthritis Services selected [Claris Companion](#), an easy-to-use tablet and software solution specifically designed for older seniors.

Key features of Claris Companion include:

- Built-in 4G/LTE cellular internet service for seniors without access to WiFi.
- Seamlessly integrated messaging, video calling, photo sharing, internet browsing, games, alerts, and more.
- One-click customization for staff to remotely personalize each tablet.
- **Claris Insight™**, a reporting and data visualization component of the Claris Companion platform that helps staff track how clients are interacting with their tablets at home.



IMPLEMENTATION

To reach as many people as possible, Arthritis Services came up with a plan to rotate the **Claris Companion** tablets through its clients. Every six weeks, the tablets were collected, sanitized, and distributed to a new group, with priority given to those who were the most frail, vulnerable, or in need.

Clients used the tablets to join live group classes led by Arthritis Services instructors. They also had access to simple, pre-loaded exercise and movement workout programs. Case workers used the devices to check in with homebound seniors. And many clients enjoyed

calling family and friends, or playing games to beat the loneliness and boredom of isolation.

COVID relief funding paid for the tablets and cellular service.

RESULTS

Altogether, 89 of Arthritis Services' most vulnerable clients used **Clarís Companion** to access the agency's programs and services.

An Arthritis Services' client survey found that 96% of participants reported that the socialization they got from the program helped them feel more connected during the pandemic. Importantly, the same number said that their ability to stand up from a chair, walk, and balance all improved thanks to the virtual classes. Some 99% said they'd like access to the Clarís Companion tablets in the future.

"Without Clarís Companion, I would be bored, I would be unhappy."

Other outcomes included:

- 56% of participants reported an increase in physical fitness.
- 39% reported improvement in their ability to do the normal activities of daily living.
- 33% reported feeling less lonely and isolated.
- 31% reported a reduction in perceived pain.

In written comments, one client shared, "I liked the classes because I met new people, learned to exercise, and improved my balance." Another said, "I enjoyed the exercise classes and the card games since I haven't been able to get together with my friends to play!"

One extremely homebound and high-risk client with multiple chronic diseases was allowed to keep his tablet after expressing that the program had made a life-changing difference in his mood and physical health saying, "Without Clarís Companion, I would be bored, I would be unhappy."

Based on the program's popularity, Arthritis Services of Charlotte-Mecklenburg County now plans to seek grant funding to continue the Clarís Companion service.

About Claris Healthcare

Claris Healthcare understands that the complexity of current technology creates a barrier for older seniors to access online care and connections with loved ones. We believe thoughtfully designed and implemented technology can be used at scale to dramatically improve the lives of those most in need, so we develop engaging technology specifically designed to connect seniors to their care providers, families, and friends from the comfort of their own homes. Claris offers a unique combination of intuitive software, devices, and implementation services developed to address the mental and physical health needs of older adults. Claris serves many social service agencies like Area Agency on Aging, Meals on Wheels America, and other home and community-based care organizations.

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About Arthritis Services of Charlotte-Mecklenburg County

We believe that self-management lifestyle skills will help you stay **HEALTHY AND HAPPY** - despite the chronic pain and dysfunction often associated with arthritis and related chronic health conditions. We are a local resource that celebrates 44 years (and counting!) making ourselves available to consult with you on your journey to health and happiness. It takes good medical care first and foremost, and then...learning skills to do **YOUR** part in achieving wellness.

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