



SILVER CHAIN GROUP

INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF HOME CARE VISITS WITH MOBILE SOLUTION

Silver Chain Group is one of Australia's largest not-for-profit health and community care organisations, providing a large range of services to assist people in their homes for over 100 years. It is focused on helping clients achieve independence for as long as possible, as well as supporting the health and wellbeing of the wider community. With over 3,000 staff and 400 volunteers, the Group assists more than 87,000 people in their homes each year.

The Group provides services across Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. These services include specialist nursing, palliative care, home care and support services, Home Hospital and allied health services. In FY2012-2013 the Group provided over 1.8 million hours of care to more than 87,000 clients across 2.76 million occasions of service.

NEED FOR UPDATED INFORMATION

In the past, direct care staff visited a number of clients a day, for appointments ranging from a few minutes to over an hour. Along with hours of travel, staff also experienced down-time between appointments. The client's healthcare records were paper-based and located in the client's home, restricting access to the time of visits and to staff present at each visit. Preparation for the visits and sharing information between direct care staff was an important but lengthy process.

"We were looking to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of visits – to help make it easy for staff to be prepared and informed about a client's health or aware of some potential risks (staff safety) or client preferences before a visit, potentially

"The benefits of using Samsung mobile devices to facilitate communications in Silver Chain Group's Telehealth Program can be great. Some clients in the Telehealth Program can be monitored in their own home by Silver Chain Group nurses with the assistance of separate medical devices, which register when a client's readings have begun to move outside of an acceptable range, and send a notification to nurses via mobile networks."

Lee Davis
CIO, Silver Chain Group

SAMSUNG AUSTRALIA CASE STUDY: SILVER CHAIN GROUP

increasing the available hours of care and decreasing the amount of time spent behind the wheel of a car or in an office,” said Lee Davis, Chief Information Officer at Silver Chain Group.

DEVELOPING THE RIGHT MOBILITY SOLUTION

Silver Chain Group established EOS Technologies as a social enterprise to develop and implement ComCare, an enterprise healthcare solution with a mobile application designed for direct care staff. While ComCare and the initial implementation offered increased collaboration, the Silver Chain Group sought advice on continued expansion and improvement of the mobile strategy. Of critical importance was flexibility in devices for different uses by direct care staff.

“Flexibility was key for us, as the devices needed to be used by both staff in the field, conducting a range of services, and clients who may not be familiar with the technology,” said Davis.

Silver Chain Group deployed a range of Samsung mobile devices, including over 2,000 Samsung Galaxy S2, S3, S4, Note and Note II smartphones, and Samsung Galaxy Note 8, 10.1 and Tab 10.1 tablet devices to direct care staff and clients.

“The Samsung Tab 10.1 was suitable where a large screen was necessary to view information and utilise new communication methods, such as video conferencing,” said Davis. “Other staff simply required a compact way to access their appointment schedule and basic client information for which the Samsung smartphones were helpful. There are also staff who enjoy the option to use the Galaxy Note devices’ S-Pen to access and input information.”

DELIVERING MOBILITY ASSISTANCE

The ComCare Mobile application is used for healthcare management, including secure mobile access to clients’ healthcare records and route improvement for home visits based on the type of care required, the length of time needed and the location of the client. Direct care staff are able to plan their visits efficiently, be aware of some potential safety risks in individual homes and spend time with clients effectively.

Samsung devices are also used for communications in new, remote healthcare services. Silver Chain Group has a Telehealth Program, where clients are provided with

separate medical devices, including pulse oximeters, blood-glucose monitors, weighing scales and thermometers which transmit data via Bluetooth™ enabled Samsung devices over mobile networks. Data is pushed to the Silver Chain Telehealth cloud service and monitored by nurses who respond when they receive ‘out of bounds’ data.

“The video conferencing in our Virtual Hospital Service has been incredible for our nurses. For clients that simply need virtual support, video conferencing can allow nurses to communicate with clients more efficiently.”

The Group’s Virtual Hospital Service utilises the Samsung devices for video conferencing. Nurses can connect with remote clients for medication prompts or insulin administration; nurses assist clients with some medication requirements without the need to visit the client. The ability to connect remotely to these clients promotes efficient use of time.

HELPING TO DELIVER BUSINESS RESULTS

Since the implementation of the Samsung mobility solution combined with the ComCare Mobile application, the Silver Chain Group has experienced efficiencies in some areas of operation, including reduced travel.

“The efficiencies and virtual communication gained with assistance from the Samsung devices working with our ComCare Mobile application has been outstanding right across the Group’s healthcare services,” said Davis. “Our direct care staff can spend time with clients more efficiently. Before each visit, staff can be assisted in their preparation by accessing the client’s updated healthcare information. Updates to the client’s information can be made from the client’s home and are securely stored in one place.

“The benefits of using Samsung mobile devices to facilitate communications in Silver Chain Group’s Telehealth Program can be great. Some clients in the Telehealth Program can be monitored in their own home by Silver Chain Group nurses with the assistance of separate medical devices, which register when a client’s readings have begun to move outside an acceptable range and send a notification to nurses via mobile

networks. Clients can also send video or written messages directly to a nurse from their device.

“The video conferencing in our Virtual Hospital Service has been incredible for our nurses. For clients that simply need virtual support, video conferencing can allow nurses to communicate with clients more efficiently.”

Silver Chain Group has also witnessed an unexpected social benefit arise from the implementation of Samsung devices. The Group has learned of some Aged Care clients virtually connecting to distant family and friends and clients asking to keep the device.

“Since implementing the mobility solution we have heard of clients becoming comfortable with the devices and we welcome personal use in their homes. We’ve received great feedback about the readability of the large screens, and the ability for clients to video conference family, helping them to keep in touch more often,” said Davis.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Silver Chain Group is already working to enhance the mobile solution and continue to roll out the Telehealth Program and video conferencing as part of the Virtual Hospital Program. The Group plans to demonstrate the benefits of the mobile solution to other home healthcare providers in Australia.

“We were drawn by Samsung’s continued innovation in communication devices. We are constantly looking to evolve and improve our services through the mobile solution and Samsung’s innovation in that space is flexible to support our continued development,” said Davis.

“EOS Technologies already works with a number of care organisations across Australia, helping to make a difference to the care delivered and enhance efficiencies. Silver Chain Group’s rollout of the Samsung mobility solution can help to obtain communication benefits and we’re aiming to continually advance to help improve the productivity of the sector as a whole.”

PRODUCTS USED

Samsung Galaxy S2, S3 and S4 smartphones
Samsung Galaxy Note and Note II smartphones
Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1
Samsung Galaxy Note 8 and Note 10.1 tablets