

Revolutionizing LTSS: Enhancing Care with Remote Support

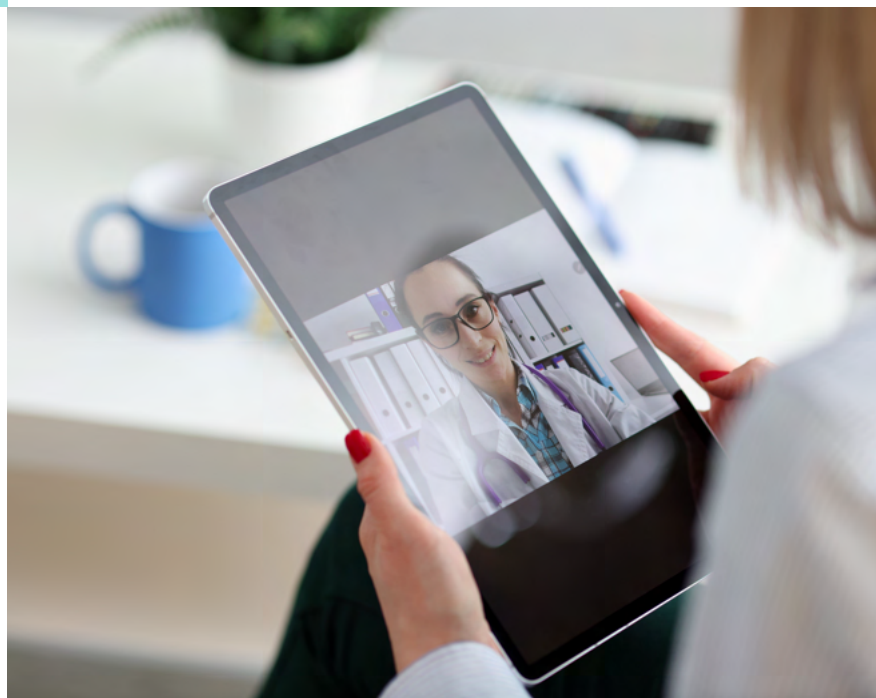
Executive Summary



The Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) sector faces significant challenges in delivering quality care due to the high overhead costs and staff burnout associated with institutional, in-person care models. These operational pressures have exacerbated workforce shortages, severely limiting the sector's capacity to meet increasing demand.

The use of remote support, particularly remote direct support professionals (rDSPs), presents a promising solution to these challenges. While still in its early stages, rDSP services show potential in enhancing the independence of care recipients, alleviating DSP staffing shortages, and expanding care capacity.

rDSP services show potential in enhancing the independence of care recipients, alleviating DSP staffing shortages, and expanding care capacity.



Introduction



Technology is a powerful tool that significantly broadens the channels through which we communicate, facilitating social connections that transcend geographical and cultural barriers (Ruben, Stosic, Correale, & Blanch-Hartigan, 2021). This potential extends to enhancing inclusion, independence, self-determination, and engagement for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) (Friedman, 2023a). Moreover, technology has gained significant popularity among older adults, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as it helps to support overall well-being and maintain community connections (Sixsmith, Horst, Simeonov, & Mihailidis, 2022). This surge in technology adoption among seniors was part of a broader trend accelerated by the pandemic, which also saw rapid advancements in telehealth, assistive technology, remote support services, and home and community-based services (HBCS) (Friedman, 2022).

This white paper explores the social and economic benefits of remote support solutions as a promising strategy to tackle challenges in LTSS. It highlights the emergence of rDSPs as an innovative service. By integrating rDSPs into existing care teams and combining human support with advanced technology, this approach aims to alleviate financial constraints, mitigate workforce shortages, and effectively provide more independence and care to a wider population.



Challenges to Providing Support



95^{0%}/₀

of participants reported facing moderate to severe staffing shortages in the past year

01

A Workforce in Crisis:

Direct care workers, comprising home health aides, personal care aides, nursing assistants, and psychiatric aides, constitute the backbone of LTSS. Despite their critical role, a significant majority of these workers across 34 states earn wages below \$20 per hour (Mohamed, Burns, & O'Malley Watts, 2023) due in large part to insufficient reimbursement rates in the Medicaid program (Ancor, 2023). The demand for these roles is projected to surge by 41% by 2036, outpacing the anticipated 22% growth in employment of home health and personal care aides over the next decade (National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, 2023). Alarming high turnover rates among direct care staff, ranging from 38% to 50% (PHI, 2023), underscore the urgency of this challenge.

Below are the key findings from Ancor's the State of America's Direct Support Workforce Crisis 2023 survey:

77^{0%}/₀

indicated they had to turn away new referrals over the past year due to staffing shortages

72^{0%}/₀

found it challenging to maintain established quality standards due to staffing issues

75^{0%}/₀

struggled to connect people with services because of a lack of available providers



Key findings from Ancor

54^{0%}/₀

stated that they operate in areas with few or no similar service providers

02

Waitlist Times for Homes and Community-Based Services:



Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) 1915(c) waivers represent the primary funding for LTSS for individuals with I/DD in the United States (Friedman, 2023b).

Despite a notable increase in HCBS waivers incorporating remote support services—from 7% in fiscal year 2013 to 18% in fiscal year 2021—the utilization remains low, with only 0.35% of individuals with I/DD receiving these services (Friedman, 2023b). According to a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 692,000 individuals were on waiting lists for HCBS across 38 states at the time of the survey (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2023).

Addressing these critical gaps, the Biden administration has proposed a \$150 billion increase in Medicaid HCBS spending over the next decade (Park, Gardner, Kaneb, Schneider, Mondestin, & Guest, 2024). Simultaneously, the Center for Health Care Strategies and its partners, through initiatives like the Medicaid Innovation Collaborative, are aiding states in exploring and promoting the adoption of technology-enabled solutions in both Medicaid and managed care (Brykman & Joseph, 2024). These efforts acknowledge the immediate need to change existing care models through innovative, technology-based approaches.

The Solution: Remote Supports



What are Remote Supports?

Remote supports are designed to empower individuals by customizing services and reducing dependence on in-person staff. These tech-driven solutions help maintain routine adherence, alerting nearby staff or remote call centers as needed.

Remote supports are often incorrectly perceived as strict video-monitoring and surveillance tools, rather than empowering, person-centered communication methods. Instead of being confined to a singular product or technology, remote supports typically integrate with various technologies like smartphones, environmental controls, medication dispensers, sensors, and communication devices. These supports frequently include app and phone functionalities for tasks such as managing medication adherence, ensuring cooking safety, and preventing wandering or falls. They offer customizable alerts and prompts tailored to individual preferences, ensuring timely and effective assistance.

Operational Benefits for LTSS Providers

Remote supports are significantly more cost-effective than in-person and on-site staff (Wager, Tasse, Davies, & Stock, 2018), making it feasible to efficiently serve a larger population without increasing personnel or overtime hours for staff.



Remote supports are significantly more cost-effective than in-person and on-site staff.



Making the Case

Savings exceeding \$50,000 per person through SimplyHome’s remote technology implementation.

In South Carolina, over 9,000 individuals with I/DD faced a waiting list for residential support due to insufficient funding. In response, The Carles Lea Center (CLC) took proactive steps by partnering with SimplyHome, a leader in enabling technology and remote support consulting services. By integrating SimplyHome’s technology and remote support, CLC reduced the cost of providing client support to approximately \$100 per day per individual, compared to \$200 per day without technology (SimplyHome, 2016b).

This initiative resulted in annual savings exceeding \$50,000 per person through SimplyHome’s remote technology implementation. These positive outcomes significantly improved accessibility to care, ensuring individuals received timely and effective support.

Affordable Autonomy for Individuals Receiving Remote Support

The Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) sector faces significant challenges in delivering quality care due to the high overhead costs and staff burnout associated with institutional, in-person care models. These operational pressures have exacerbated workforce shortages, severely limiting the sector’s capacity to meet increasing demand.

The use of remote support, particularly remote direct support professionals (rDSPs), presents a promising solution to these challenges. While still in its early stages, rDSP services show potential in enhancing the independence of care recipients, alleviating DSP staffing shortages, and expanding care capacity.



Making the Case

Remote support holds significant potential to revolutionize the current care model and enhance accessibility to care for all.

In one SimplyHome case study, an individual receiving remote support realized annual savings of \$78,629 by incorporating technology into their independent living arrangement rather than opting for assisted living (SimplyHome, 2016b).

Innovative Resources for Independence (IRI), a New York-based provider, saw close to 20% of residents transition to independent living after using SimplyHome’s remote support services. (SimplyHome, 2016c).


With benefits for both providers and recipients, remote support holds significant potential to revolutionize the current care model and enhance accessibility to care for all. However, the field of remote support continues to evolve with ongoing innovations, among the most notable being remote DSPs.

How Remote Support Works: Furthering Independence



What is a Remote DSP?

Remote Direct Support Professionals (rDSPs) integrate personalized human interaction from off-site locations with advanced, smart technology solutions. Utilizing real-time communication and information from smart technology devices, rDSPs provide 24/7 support, personalized care plans, emergency responses, and emotional support, empowering users to lead an independent life while feeling secure. Through close collaboration with individuals, families, and on-site staff, rDSPs ensure comprehensive and customized care that addresses the unique needs of each recipient.



rDSPs ensure comprehensive and customized care that addresses the unique needs of each recipient.

What Makes Remote DSPs so Promising?



01

Benefits for Individuals

Providers can expand their services by utilizing rDSP support, ensuring that more individuals receive timely assistance regardless of location, thereby minimizing disparities in service access. For individuals receiving care, rDSPs are accessible 24/7, empowering them to utilize services according to their needs. This constant availability promotes independent living with enhanced security, ensuring that support is always within reach.

02

Benefits for DSPs

Due to long hours and extensive on-site duties, DSPs often experience extreme stress and burnout, leading to turnover and vacant positions (Keesler & Troxel, 2020). Remote DSP positions help mitigate burnout by reducing the need for 24/7 on-site staff and offering the flexibility to share workload responsibilities remotely. This remote work setup promotes a better work-life balance for DSPs, potentially lowering stress, improving overall mental well-being, and enhancing staff retention.

03

Benefits for Providers

Remote DSPs allow providers more flexibility in their staffing approaches. Proprietary technologies like SimplyHome's sensor-based technology enable providers to seamlessly integrate their existing care teams with rDSP technologies and collaborate with external personnel, thereby boosting operational efficiency and accelerating and expanding the delivery of care services. Furthermore, rDSPs can be more cost-effective than traditional on-site staffing models, allowing organizations to optimize budgets and potentially reallocate resources to further expand their capacity.

Challenges and Looking Forward



Every innovation-seeking widespread use and acceptance faces adoption challenges, and rDSPs are no exception. Some of these challenges include limited internet accessibility and adequate training. Many individuals with disabilities encounter barriers to accessing high-speed Internet and up-to-date technology and are significantly less likely to use the Internet daily compared to the general population (Bureau of Internet Accessibility, 2022).

Integrating rDSPs into LTSS provider workflows also presents a significant challenge, as highlighted by a survey indicating that only 28% of organizations feel adequately prepared to introduce and support technology for individuals with I/DD (Tanis & ANCOR, 2021). SimplyHome's rDSP solution has the potential to address this challenge by enabling organizations to integrate their existing care teams and infrastructure into advanced technology support systems.

Despite initial challenges, rDSPs hold promise in transforming the way LTSS providers deliver care. With continued research and investment, this solution has the potential to empower more individuals to live autonomously and securely, while also reducing costs for individuals and providers alike.

This solution has the potential to empower more individuals to live autonomously and securely.

