

John is 88 years of age and has chronic heart failure. Secondary problems associated with his condition include hypertension, breathlessness, fatigue and respiratory issues.

John suffers from ischemic cardiomyopathy; a narrowing or hardening of the small blood vessels that bring blood and oxygen to his heart.

When these are blocked or very narrowed, over time, the heart muscle does not work as well resulting in congestive heart failure. John's condition means that his heart has lost the ability to efficiently pump enough blood to supply his body with optimal levels of oxygen and nutrients.

As a result, John suffers symptoms including fatigue, weakness and shortness of breath. Secondary respiratory infections are also a concern due to excess fluid build up in John's lungs.

John was recommended by his clinician for the Heart Failure Service Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital (RBWH) Health Services District telehealth trial (a research program of RBWH HFS and the University of Southern Queensland). His condition was becoming increasingly unstable and indicators such as his weight and blood pressure were often difficult to accurately monitor by phone.

### The solution

A Tunstall telehealth solution was installed in John's

## Case Study- John's Story



home, including an RTX monitor, blood pressure monitor, pulse oximeter and weight scale.

John was shown how to measure his vital signs using the RTX monitor and to answer a series of clinical questions to determine his current condition. John's vital signs were monitored daily by a clinician who works closely with him and his wife to better manage his condition.

### How it works

Telehealth allows a patient to manage their condition from home, reducing unplanned GP visits and decreasing the need for emergency hospital visits. Telehealth requires the patient to take their vital signs, such as heart rate, weight and blood pressure, and answer a series of health related questions on a regular basis.

These details are then transmitted to a monitoring centre where the data is compared to the patient's 'normal' readings. Abnormal readings are flagged for follow up and passed onto the patient's doctor. The doctor can then advise the patient of what action needs to be taken, including adjustments to medication.



The equipment allowed us to respond rapidly to changes in John's weights or vital signs. It helped keep him out of hospital and more stable due to the close monitoring"

- Linda ; John's clinician

## The future

To manage John's condition, a continuing focus will be placed on regular monitoring of his vital signs and symptoms. This will allow his medication to be properly adjusted as required.

John now understands the benefit and importance of measuring his vital signs everyday. Over the course of the program, John says he learnt a lot about his condition, his symptoms and the importance of daily monitoring.

John says, "I learnt a lot about myself and it (telehealth) taught me discipline, daily use at the same time each day was most important. I would recommend it to anybody".



Telehealth provides the patient's doctor with ongoing information so that a decline in health can be identified and managed well before it reaches crisis point.

## The results

John completed his telehealth interview and took his vital sign readings consistently every morning between 7-8am.

John's clinicians found the daily telehealth interview helped to set a regular routine for John, encouraging him to be more consistent in monitoring his vital signs and symptoms each day.

By tracking John's weight and oxygen saturation levels; the icp triage manager software was able to track changes outside of John's set of safe parameters.

Should John's weight increase rapidly and his oxygen saturation reduce, the monitoring centre could immediately alert John's clinicians to the changes, allowing them to initiate proactive medication management.

By monitoring John's condition remotely, his condition could be stabilised and unplanned hospital admissions avoided.

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