

Customer Q&A: Veterans Affairs Sports Programs

Social Distancing And Contact Tracing Solution

Alerting and Recording Workplace Interactions to Reduce Contagions

“The health of our veterans is first and foremost. We needed a way to help keep participants socially distant and quickly do contact tracing in the event of a positive test. This solution helps provide a common standard of care across all our populations.” David Tostenrude, Director of National Wheelchair Games

VA’s Sports Programs

VA’s Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events provides Veterans with opportunities for health and healing through adaptive sports and therapeutic art programs. These specialized rehabilitation events aim to optimize Veterans’ independence, community engagement, well-being, and quality of life.

Q&A

David Tostenrude, Director of National Wheelchair Games describe the VA’s experience with AiRISTA’s Social Distancing & Contact Tracing Solution to help avoid the spread of COVID among athletes and the support staff during a series of VA sports events.

With hundreds of athletes and staff participating, were you bound to have positive test cases?

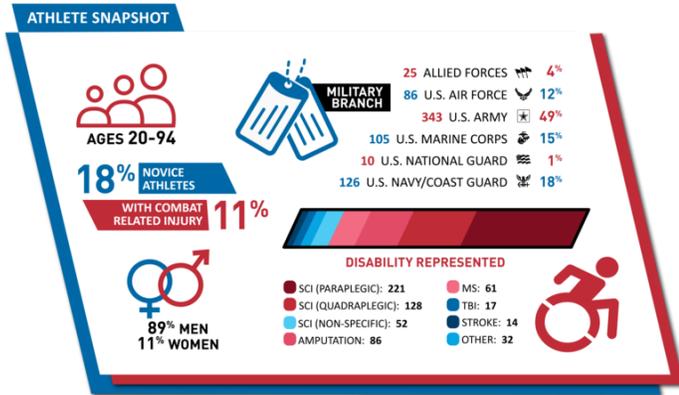
The Creative Arts Festival was our first event and included 290 participants. Everyone gets tested daily and we had 6 positive results. We were able to produce a contacting tracing report instantly. To protect privacy, the report provided only MAC addresses of the tags which we then associated with names of individuals we recommended quarantine or be on the lookout for symptoms. Daily reports told the executive staff the contact rates and trends. We were surprised at how few interactions occurred within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes.

Did you need to make any system adjustments on the fly?

The tags make a beep sound when people come withing 6 feet. We didn’t consider the distraction of 600 beeping tags. We were able to push new settings to all tags over the air to use flashing LEDs instead of beeping alerts. We also pushed a configuration for tags to report to the cloud more often than once a day.



PERSONNEL SAFETY SOLUTIONS



What future events are you planning?

The Wheelchair Games, Golden Age Games, and Summer Sports Clinic are coming up. Health issues like MS, stroke, amputations, spinal cord and comorbidities put our athletes at greater risk so we need to be vigilant.

Are you looking for volunteers for these events?

These are great events that help our vets get back into life as part of the rehab process. We are always eager to welcome new volunteers. You get back more than you put in. To learn how to get involved people can contact sports4vets@va.gov

How it Works

Using BLE proximity, tags record other tags in the vicinity and alert the wearer when time & distance criteria are met. The stored contacts are uploaded to the cloud when the tags come near gateway devices. Users run reports including contact tracing from the cloud and access management tools.



WHY AiRISTA

Experts in wireless RTLS for over 10 years, AiRISTA was recognized as a LEADER in Gartner’s Magic Quadrant for Indoor Location Services (2022).

Are there any lessons learned you can share with others?

Assigning tags to individuals on the day of the event was crazy. Going forward we plan to assign tags to people in advance and put them in their registration envelop. We will also create blank registration envelops with tags for walk-ins. Tag activation should be done in advance too. Battery levels were still at 85% after the event, but we will need to develop a replacement process at some point.

Did you need a lot of support from AiRISTA?

We were pressed for time with our first event, so when we got our first positive test result, an AiRISTA team jumped on a call with only 10 minutes notice. Our executive team was in the room and were pleased with the response. We were also able to access knowledgeable staff after hours. Their support exceeded our expectations.

SOLUTION BENEFITS

- Fast, affordable, simple to use
- Small sleek tags worn as wrist straps, pendants, or key fobs
- Long lasting battery, field replaceable
- Centralized cloud management
- Over-the-air programmable tag configurations



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