

Using a Mobile-Technology Tool to Assist Meals on Wheels Drivers in Conducting Home Wellness Checks

Andrea M. Morris¹, David M. Dosa^{2,3}, Emily Gadbois³, Renee R. Shield³, Uche Akobundu⁴, Kali S. Thomas^{2,3}

¹West Health Institute, La Jolla, CA

²U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Providence, RI

³Center for Gerontology & Healthcare Research, Brown University, Providence, RI

⁴Meals on Wheels America, Arlington, VA

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Introduction

- Growing evidence that social determinants (e.g. nutrition, transportation, and housing) have a significant impact on health and well-being.
- Opportunity to leverage home meal-delivery programs, such as Meals on Wheels (MOW), to proactively identify and address unmet social needs and create partnerships with providers and payers to better support clients.
- We conducted a pilot study to evaluate the use of a mobile technology tool to assist drivers with client wellness checks during routine meal delivery.

Methods

- A technology enhanced home meal-delivery service was conducted at two MOW sites. Implementation was staggered by 4-5 months across sites.

Site 1: Program with 3,000+ volunteer drivers that deliver meals to 3,000+ clients across urban, suburban, and rural areas in one county.

- Sample: 5 routes, 35 drivers, 208 clients

Site 2: Program with 18+ paid drivers delivering meal to 600+ clients across several rural counties.

- Sample: 16 routes, 18 drivers, 641 clients

Intervention

- MOW drivers were trained to use a mobile application that enabled them to submit electronic wellness alerts when they had a concern or noticed a change in a client's health, safety, or well-being during meal delivery.
- Responses were sent electronically to a trained care navigator (CN), who followed up with clients, further assessed unmet needs, and connected clients with necessary services.

Analysis

- Focus groups were conducted after 2 months of use to gauge drivers' satisfaction and document their experiences with the tool.
- Data on wellness alerts and CNs responses were collected.
- Preliminary findings for Site 1 are presented. Additional analyses for Site 2 are underway.

Intervention

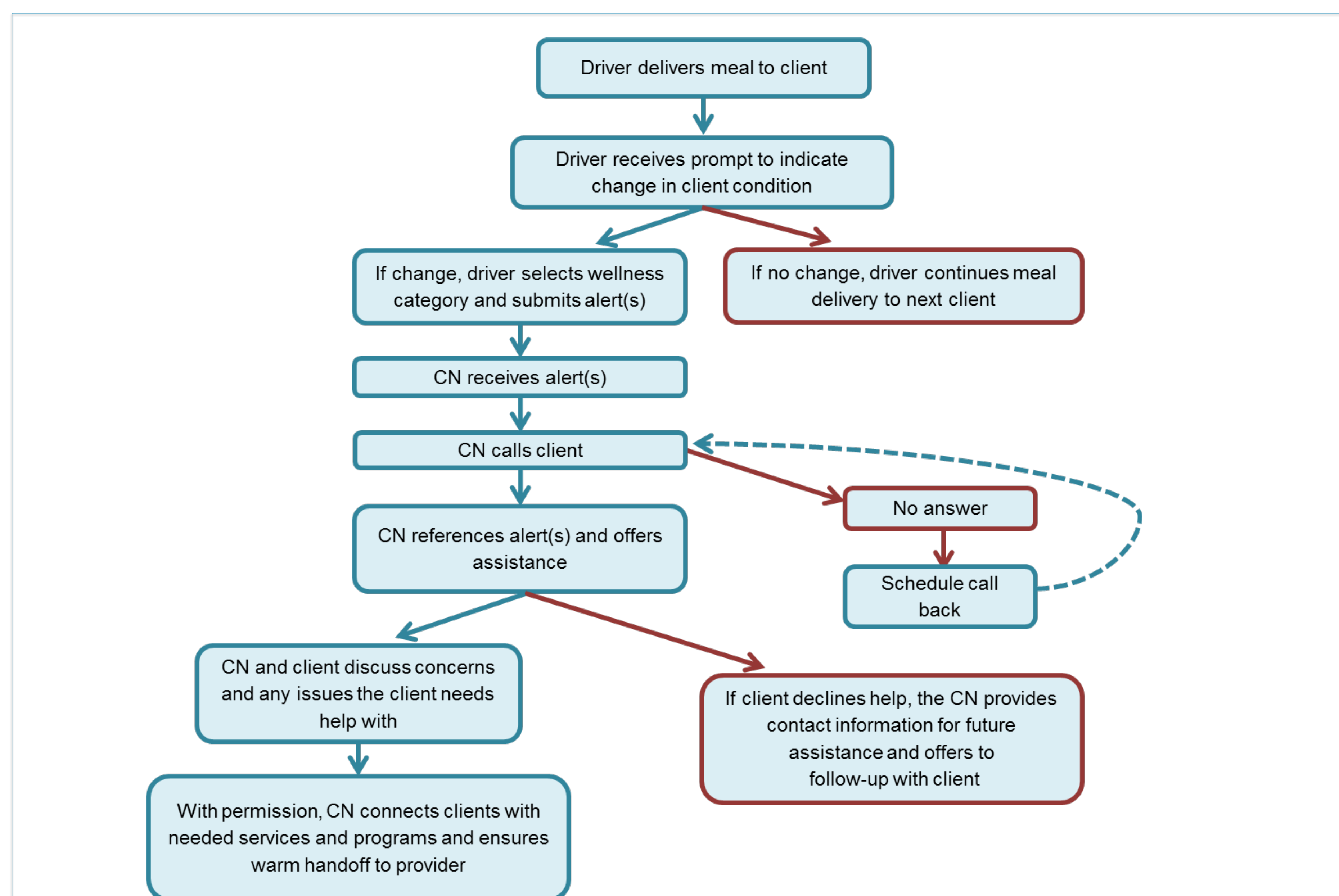


Figure 1. Description of Wellness Alert and Care Navigation Intervention

Results

- Site 1: Over an 11-month period, 168 wellness alerts were submitted for 48 clients across wellness categories (Figure 2), with 20 clients experiencing multiple alerts across time.

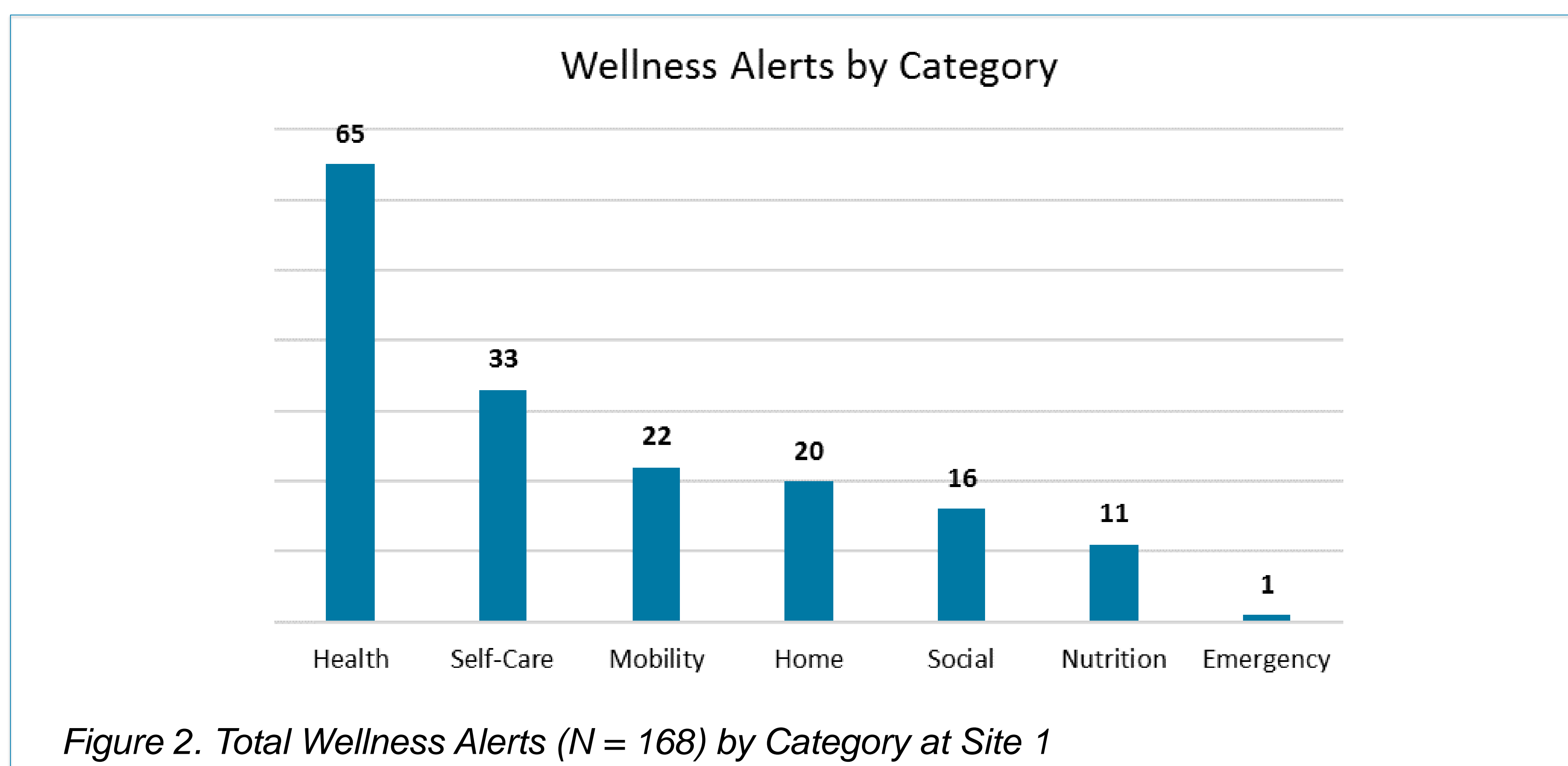


Figure 2. Total Wellness Alerts (N = 168) by Category at Site 1

Referrals for Services and Supports

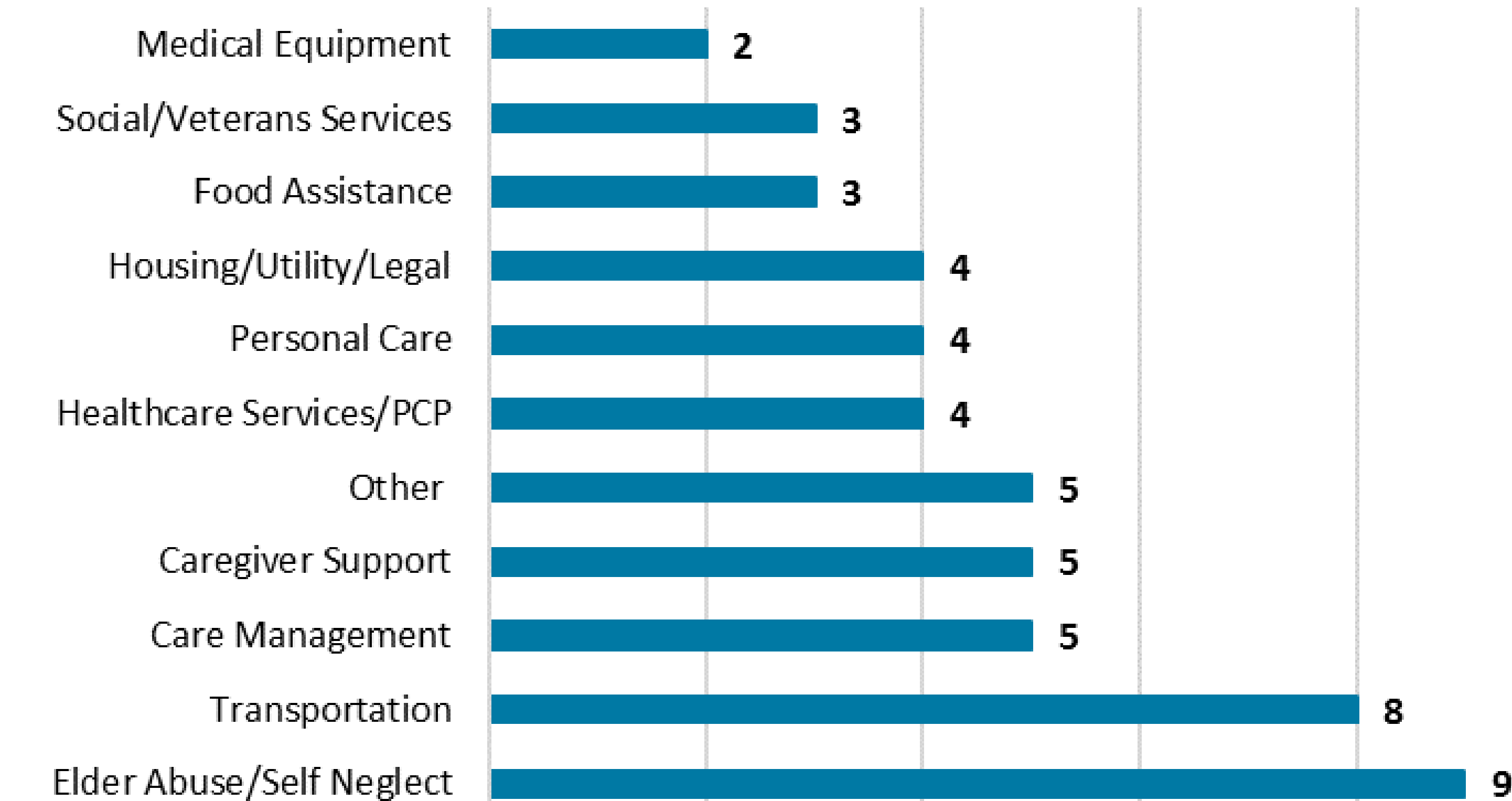


Figure 3. Total Referrals (N = 52) for MOW Clients at Site 1

- Upon follow-up with the client by the CN, 52 referrals were made for needed services and supports across service categories (Figure 3).
- In addition, the CN deemed that no assistance was needed for 22 wellness alerts upon follow-up with the client and 3 more clients declined further assistance.
- Focus groups revealed that drivers found the application easy to use and valued the wellness checks as an 'important contribution' to their meal delivery.

Conclusions

- This project demonstrates the feasibility of a scalable mobile application that enables drivers to conduct electronic wellness checks during routine meal deliveries and may serve as an early-warning system to mitigate or prevent adverse health events.
- Additional research is needed to determine the impact of addressing social determinants for MOW clients on health outcomes and costs.