Smart and Connected Churches for Promoting Health in Disadvantaged Populations

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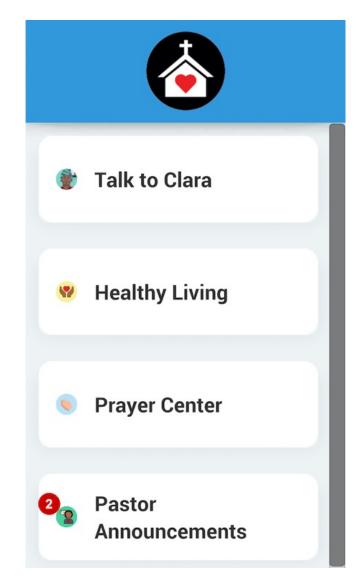IRG, FY2018

Problem

- Improve health for an underserved community
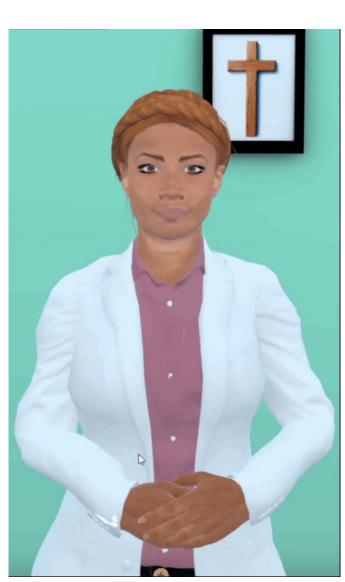- Improve exercise, diet, mental health
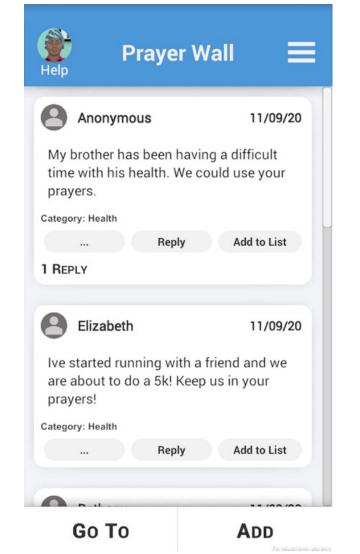
Developed Methods for

- Conversational agent-based promotion of multiple health behaviors.
- Leveraging social networks to maintain engagement in health interventions.
- Religious and spiritual tailoring of health promotion content.
- Participatory design of conversational agents.
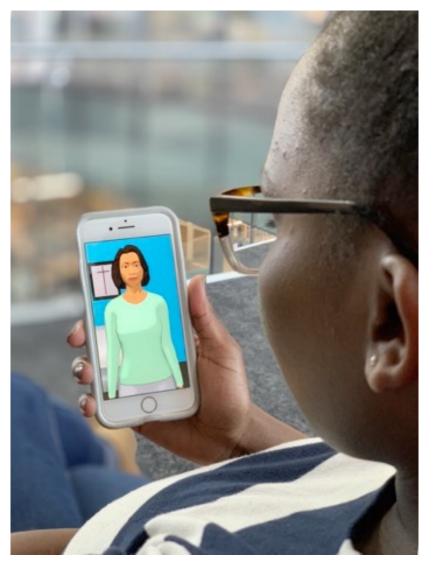- Crowdsourced content for health promotion interventions.

Project Activities

- 26 focus groups & participatory design sessions
- Design studies
- 28-day pilot with 24 members of 2 churches

App Functions

- Agent health counseling
  - Exercise, Nutrition, Hydration, Stress reduction
- Prayer request & response
- Pastor message broadcast
- Bible stories

Impact

- Improve exercise, diet, mental health
- Improve social cohesion & support

Broader Impact

- Methods for community-based participatory design of interventions
- Applicability to other groups (e.g., workgroups, social groups, neighborhoods)

Next Steps

- Complete mental health & interpersonal violence modules
- Conduct 600-participant evaluation