



“A Sense of Relief”

TimelyCare Helps Western Colorado University Overcome Challenges of Rural Setting

Summary



Type:

Public university

Founded:

1901

Location:

Gunnison, Colorado

Athletics:

NCAA Division II

Enrollment:

~3,000

Launched TimelyCare in fall 2021

Challenge

Located in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, Western Colorado University (WCU) is a public, liberal arts college known for its tight-knit community, small town charm, and picturesque scenery. But the same qualities that attract students to its campus can be challenges when it comes to managing their mental health. As is the case in many rural communities, they face widespread counselor shortages, a lack of diverse care providers, and long wait times for appointments. And, every year winter's freezing temperatures and longer nights cause many students to experience seasonal affective disorder.

“It’s not a secret there are mental health crises in small mountain towns. We’re isolated. Gunnison is four hours away from any major city, and a lot of students are away from home.”

Christine Spears

Program Coordinator for Student Health and Wellness

As capacity issues and wait times for care worsened, WCU partnered with a local counseling center to manage the growing demand for mental health services. But the wait time to see a therapist remained too long. Many students still had difficulty finding the right therapist for their needs. “We have two providers on campus and very few in the valley,” said Spears. “So, you can run out of people you think would work for you really quickly.”



73% of WCU patients would have done nothing without access to TimelyCare

“With increased demand that has grown pretty exponentially over the last several years, we just couldn’t keep pace. Students were having to wait for days to get in to see a counselor, and so it was an imperative that we had to figure out other solutions.”

Brad Baca
President

Staffing needs aside, the rural nature of the community presented yet another barrier to care. Many students felt they couldn’t be discreet in seeking help for their mental health. Mila Lume, a fourth-year student said, “Privacy means a lot in a small community where there is a tight-knit network of people that know each other. It’s a fantastic thing, but when it comes to intricate details of your personal life, sometimes you don’t want everybody to know or make an assumption if they see you coming out of a counseling office.” University employees shared similar concerns. “There’s still that stigma I think, about going up to the counseling center and accessing that kind of service.” said the Dean of Students Gary Pierson, “but there’s some reticence about running into students.”

WCU needed a solution to help overcome:

- Growing demand for mental health care
- Long wait times for therapy
- Lack of access to diverse mental health counselors

Solution

WCU leaders had exhausted the available campus and community resources. They knew they needed to address the urgent need for mental health services that extended beyond their health and wellness team’s programming that focused on building skills to cope but not direct counseling. Student mental health remained a top priority within the school’s strategic resource allocation program, so the search for a complementary, cost-effective solution with access to a diverse care provider network began. Pierson said that the 24/7 access was critical. “What we were really attracted to with TimelyCare was the accessibility, as well as the quality of the service that we had heard about and that we were getting for our students.”

But WCU needed more than an easy-to-access app; they needed a strategic partner to help launch a brand new virtual care program. With personal service from TimelyCare’s dedicated client success team, staff members and student ambassadors rallied to encourage students to download the app as an act of preparedness – a way to avoid overwhelm in future moments of distress. This made an immeasurable impact on Lume. “TimelyCare was great because I didn’t have to submit a lot of information.”

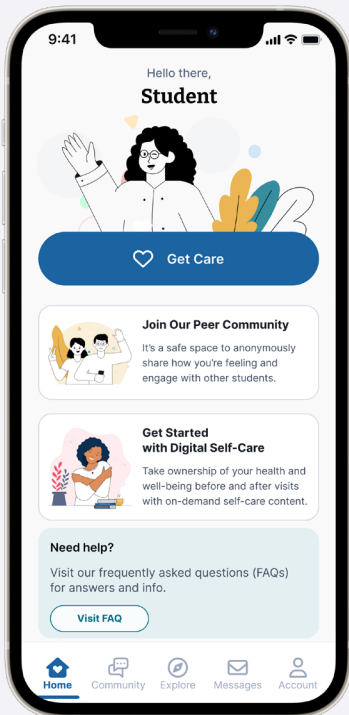
“With TimelyCare, I can have students scan a QR code, sign up if they haven’t already, and know that they have the ability to connect with someone to talk to at the click of a button.”

Sam Micka
Assistant Professor of Computer Science



“Accessibility, convenience, and the service have been the things that have really stood out for me in working with TimelyCare.”

Gary Pierson
Dean of Students



37% of all WCU visits are for after-hours care



Top reasons WCU patients sought support:

- Anxiety
- Stress
- Depression

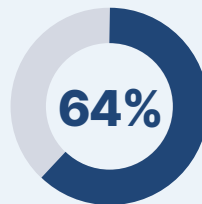
By partnering with TimelyCare, WCU expanded its mental health services to include:

- On-demand emotional and mental support
- Appointment-based counseling sessions
- Advanced psychiatric care
- On-demand self-care tools and resources
- A nationwide peer support community

Results

With TimelyCare, WCU did more than just provide much-needed mental health resources. The expanded access has helped build student resilience. Students have provided overwhelmingly positive feedback, creating a new narrative around campus health. The common theme? Relief.

Remarking on her first experience with TimelyCare, student Precious Allen said, “I was in my room and admitted to myself I needed help. The fact that I could just pull out my phone and have a conversation in a safe space where I didn’t have to hold back tears was really nice. There was a sense of relief after the session – being in a space where I could process what I went through.”



of students say mental health resources provided by their institution make them more likely to graduate

Source: Nationwide College Student Survey, Fall 2023

Additionally, students appreciated the access to a diverse network of care providers. “Being a Black student, a marginalized student, on Western’s campus is a unique experience in and of itself,” said Allen. “And so having TimelyCare and having access to a mental health clinician who identifies with you is very significant because sometimes I can talk about topics that aren’t really known about or experienced here on campus.”

A SENSE OF RELIEF

TIMELYCARE HELPS WESTERN COLORADO UNIVERSITY OVERCOME CHALLENGES OF RURAL SETTING

“TimelyCare has made my job easier because I feel confident that students are getting support I can’t give them. They have someone with them all the time. It’s not just my responsibility or Western’s alone. We’re in this together.”

McKenzie Mathewson
Associate Director of Residence Life



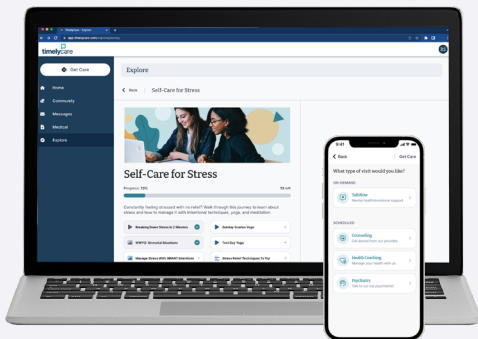
Average rating
of visits

4.9/5.0



Average rating
of providers

4.9/5.0



Where students once had to wait weeks for a therapy session, TimelyCare’s nationwide network of mental health professionals makes it simple to get care.

“It’s super easy,” said student Justyn Beckham. “Within seconds I’m able to book an appointment on the app.” Students no longer have to carry the burden of finding alternatives to care in their most vulnerable time of need. With TimelyCare, WCU leaders can easily connect students to supplemental health and wellness services. More importantly, students can now connect with a mental health professional of their choosing to get the care they need to stay healthy, engaged, and on track to meet their academic goals.

Campus Impact of TimelyCare



79% of WCU patients report mental health improvement after a visit

“TimelyCare was a great ability for us to expand in a way that was cost-effective. I can’t foresee a situation in which we would move away from TimelyCare or a virtual solution. It’s going to be a big piece to our puzzle.”

Brad Baca
President

Ready to transform your campus? **Get started at [timelycare.com](https://www.timelycare.com)**