



Four Reasons Hospitals are Embracing Telemedicine

If anyone were to ask twenty-five years ago what the future of delivering medical care would look like, it's doubtful that many would have expected that physicians would be virtually seeing patients in the ER or that access to physician specialists would be enhanced with video communication technology. But now, with the hindsight bias of COVID-19, telemedicine has become embraced, even expected, in hospitals across the country. It's been a silver lining result of the pandemic – telemedicine is a new norm for hospitals seeking to deliver more resilient, adaptable and innovative access to healthcare services.

Telemedicine is here to stay and will continue to flourish. **A Definitive Healthcare study** found that 75% of U.S. hospitals are using telehealth and telemedicine systems, up 42% from 2019. Not only has the pandemic accelerated many hospitals' use of virtual care, it has also had a positive impact on long-term plans to continue its use. Research from Fierce Healthcare confirms this, reporting that 73% of respondents report their health system has made investment in their telehealth platform or video infrastructure in the past 12 months. **The top priorities are to improve patient/member experience (65%) and expand access to care (59%).**

Why is telemedicine such a fast-growing healthcare delivery option? Consider these key reasons hospitals are embracing a hybrid care delivery model.



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1

Accessibility

Hospitals that invest in telemedicine benefit from the capability to provide access to world-class neurologists, cardiologists, oncologists, and other specialists to anyone, whether they live in the rural countryside or major metropolitan cities. Rather than transporting the patient to the specialist, telemedicine delivers the doctor to the patient who receives the right care, at the right place, at the right time. ***By incorporating telemedicine in rural areas, for instance, physician specialists can reach more patients and improve struggling rural hospital revenue.*** By providing personalized care in much the same way in-person care is delivered, telemedicine enables these hospitals to expand their customer base and have a positive impact on the health of their community. In doing so, telemedicine has the power to eliminate the consequences of both the physician shortage and the equally difficult geographic distribution of doctors. As a result, hospitals may deliver specialist consultations remotely as needed, which is a considerably less expensive option than paying a specialist to be on-call.

2

Physician Response Time

One of the main concerns of hospitals when initially integrating telemedicine is maintaining the same, high-level of quality patient care they are used to. However, telemedicine in practice shows delays are limited, and ***in fact, many hospitals have actually raised their level of care with notably better response times (down to just 2-3 minutes).*** Telehospitalists provide patients with immediate access to care as well as personalized treatment. For instance, an individual suffering from a stroke needs to be assessed and remediated right away, and the telemedicine team is available to respond immediately, even when on-staff physicians cannot.

3

Increased Staff Satisfaction

Telemedicine has been highlighted as the ideal care model to assist hospitals in meeting the growing difficulties of physician shortages and addressing doctor geographic maldistribution. It can also reduce the burden on in-person staff. ***Finding a telemedicine service that responds to nursing calls in a consistent, timely, and pleasant manner makes nursing staff more productive, effective and happy.*** Telemedicine initiatives alleviate the strain of night calls on daytime doctors in smaller hospitals by resolving night coverage issues. In larger hospitals, hospital telenoctrurnist programs relieve burden on night shift ER doctors by taking all floor calls, allowing them to focus on new patients and admissions. Also, when choosing a tele-service provider, advanced solutions will even supply a dedicated team of physicians for each hospital engagement – so nurse staff gets to know their telehospitalists (it's not just a random "doc in a box"). This builds a sense of team and helps nurses have an efficient and valuable relationship with the telemedicine doctors they interact with regularly. This contributes to better patient outcomes and happier nurses. Resolving all these issues also boosts morale and retention and having this hybrid-style model of care in place can help when recruiting new doctors, and in turn, create more satisfied hospital executives.

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4

Revenue Retention

Integration with existing workflows, rapid video connections, and reduced administrative effort are all essential elements in choosing expenditures for a telemedicine service provider. Hospital and health system executives that select telemedicine solutions often point to cost savings, simplicity of use, and compatibility as their top purchasing motivators.



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Technology has made it possible to effectively treat patients remotely, enhancing treatment continuity and health outcomes. Meanwhile, health plans value the ability to more efficiently manage visit volumes, increasing member satisfaction, improving outcomes and enabling greater access to care. Patient satisfaction ratings and provider satisfaction/adoption are additional resulting benefits of a telemedicine program, creating a high return for digital care investments.

If your hospital needs to maximize its telemedicine services while also implementing effective and long-term cost-cutting measures, Eagle can work with you to develop best-in-class solutions in this continuously evolving field.

Contact Eagle today.