

The Benefits of Telespecialty Clinics

Dignity Health®, one of the largest health systems in the nation and the largest hospital provider in California, is a non-profit public benefit company principally servicing California, Arizona, and Nevada. In 2019, The Dignity Health Telemedicine Network (DHTN) provided telemedicine services at 52 different locations in those three states and Hawaii, at both Dignity Health and non-Dignity Health facilities including acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, ambulatory clinics, homes, and other community-based care settings. Through fiscal year 2019, the DHTN provided nearly 40,000 telemedicine encounters across all telehealth services.



The DHTN is currently developing scalable telehealth programs across the care continuum with the hope that one day remote care and in-person care shall be indistinguishable.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2015, the DHTN identified telehealth program opportunities within their clinic system and redesigned five existing specialty service lines to provide remote access to medical specialties not available in rural areas.

The DHTN's primary objectives in setting up a Telespecialty Clinic Program included:

- Increase access to specialty providers
- Decrease the long travel times for both patients and clinicians
- Decrease hospitalization rates, keeping patients in their community and out of high cost locations
- Decrease no-show rates for efficient care and time management

With willing providers to develop a scalable solution, Dignity Health began to implement telehealth in specialty outpatient clinics.

DHTN TELESPECIALTY SERVICE LINES:

- Tele-endocrinology
- Teleneurology (multiple sclerosis and movement disorders)
- Telebehavioral health
- Telecardiology
- Tele-electrophysiology
- Teleneurosurgery

“The ability to see patients without requiring them to travel extensive distance is a real benefit. In addition to improving access to care, patients arrive more focused, rested and less hassled, ensuring better satisfaction from the visit.”

-Dr. Patrica Ostrander, Endocrinologist, Dignity Health

THE SOLUTION

The DHTN's requirements in selecting a telehealth solution to meet their needs were:

- Support initial consult visit and follow-up care
- High-quality audio/video visit with provider camera controls
- Documentation and scheduling capabilities

The DHTN uses InTouch Health as one of its telehealth partners because of their willingness to partner in developing and implementing clinic specific software and devices. Additionally, providers appreciated InTouch Health's simplicity and ease of use.

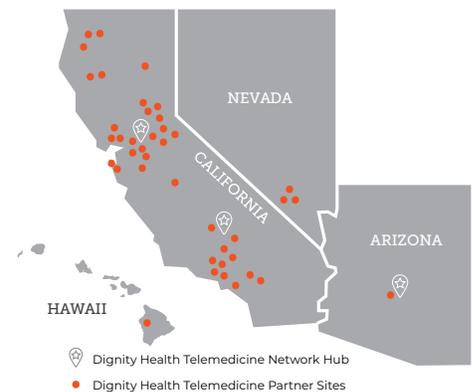
Purpose-built for telehealth in outpatient clinics, InTouch Health worked with the DHTN to create the InTouch Vici. Used in combination with InTouch's Coordinator software module, the Vici ensures easy workflow adoption for on-site providers and remote specialists.

Dignity Health's previous experiences using InTouch Health for acute care as well as the ability to coordinate care across a single virtual care platform solidified their decision.

“Having telehealth in a rural community is an invaluable service...our patients receive the best care close to home.”

-Karey McNamara, Sierra Nevada Clinic Manager, Dignity Health

DHTN serves 52 Locations across 4 states



THE RESULTS

The DHTN found that the benefits of Telespecialty clinics satisfied their main objectives: decreased no-shows, increased patient satisfaction, lessened patient travel time, and kept patients in their community. Dignity Health also saw high utilization for their Telespecialty program with 5,270 consults from 2015–2019.

In 2018, Tele-endocrinology in a single clinic resulted in:

176 consults

20,275 patient miles saved

31.2% reduced no-show rate

Across their Telespecialty programs, DHTN providers and patients surveyed expressed high satisfaction both with the technology and quality of the programs.

87.9%



of patients were very satisfied for all service lines

100%



of providers were satisfied with InTouch technology

100%



of providers & operations said telemedicine services adds quality to patient care

“Practical definition of telehealth is collaboration between provider, patient, operation and technology. Our goal is to provide a transformative care delivery experience across the entire care continuum and deliver value-based care. Dignity Health saw InTouch as a partner in development of the Vici to enable a scalable outpatient clinic program.”

-Bita Farhadpour, Telehealth Product Owner, Dignity Health