

Integration of telehealth technology in action

Success snapshots



Hospital/emergency department setting

AltaPointe Health

Consumers who present in both the ED/ICU and hospital settings receive virtual behavioral health visits from the AltaPointe clinical team. AltaPointe provided more than 8,000 behavioral health telehealth services in 2018.¹

Results:

- The average time for a hospital psychiatric consultation was reduced from 24 to 72 hours to 28 minutes
- Individuals receiving a virtual psychiatric consultation experienced a 33% reduction in emergency department costs
- “Our ED physicians feel more comfortable making decisions about patients with mental health needs because the telehealth platform provides quick and easy access to an AltaPointe Health psychiatrist,” Jeff Smith, ED case manager, Providence Hospital



Behavioral health office settings

Community Youth Services (CYS), Fairbanks & Pittsburgh Mercy

Community Youth Services (CYS) has an office in Washington state where families come for counseling services. The office uses telehealth technology to schedule and conduct sessions with a child psychiatrist located in Arizona. At Fairbanks located in Indianapolis, consumers come in for telehealth sessions with a psychiatrist who resides in Florida. Pittsburgh Mercy's local office in Pennsylvania allows individuals to connect with a psychiatrist in New York.

Results:

- By making telehealth available in a behavioral health office setting, these disparate organizations opened behavioral health care access to the limited nationwide pool of psychiatrists and psychiatric Nurse Practitioners (NPs)
- Telehealth's quality and efficiency encouraged high-value care; staffing costs decreased, organizations were able to maintain or offer additional psychiatric service offerings and additional individuals received services
- Being able to serve consumers better lifted providers' morale; as stated by a Pittsburgh Mercy representative, “We love it and it really helps with our providers and what we do.”



¹ <https://www.facebook.com/AltaPointe/posts/altapointe-provided-more-than-8000-telehealth-services-in-2018-altapointe-telehe/2055267831209711/>



Telehealth in schools and remote settings

WellStone Behavioral Health

WellStone Behavioral Health serves a large region in north Alabama of about 115 square miles in size. With only one behavioral health care provider for every 1,260 people in the state, Alabama suffers a serious shortage of behavioral health care professionals. The area WellStone serves is no exception.

WellStone worked with Madison County to place tablets in the school district for students to use for teletherapy. This dramatically expanded access by making behavioral health care services available virtually, decreased the amount of time a student had to spend out of school for an appointment, and allowed parents to join sessions remotely without the need to leave their workplace. If a student experienced a behavioral health crisis, a telehealth professional could be contacted immediately to assist.

Results:

- Access to care was greatly expanded. WellStone reaches students who otherwise might have no access to behavioral health services. By going into schools, WellStone serves students at a time convenient for them and for their families, lowering potential barriers to care, transportation problems and parental schedules.
- Telehealth enabled the Madison County school system to better address the unfunded mandates by the state to provide students with mental healthcare. They armed their staff and administrators with cost efficient access to professionals trained to handle mental health issues occurring during the school day and regained work efficiencies without actual staffing of psychiatrists and NPs in the schools, according to Matthew A. Massey, superintendent of schools, Madison County, Alabama.²
- WellStone staff report time savings of between 2 to 3 hours out of their day per session, according to Jeremy Blair, MBA, LMFT, CEO at WellStone.³ Additionally, the parents and their employers regained work productivity.

² https://www.ntst.com/Resources-and-Insights/Webinars/telehealth-advantage-for-counties?utm_source=naco&utm_campaign=publicsector&utm_medium=referral

³ Ibid.

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