

### LEVERAGING TELEMEDICINE FOR CHRONIC CARE

# Valley Health: Using Telehealth to Extend Care to Rural Patients

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“Our telehealth capabilities are expanding each year and we will continue to leverage telemedicine technology for chronic care.”

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Manager, Valley Health

### Background

Valley Health is a nonprofit organization serving the healthcare needs of people located in northern Virginia, as well as parts of West Virginia and Maryland. Headquartered in Winchester, Virginia, Valley Health operates six hospitals, which combined represent roughly 600 licensed in-patient beds, 170 long-term care beds, 5,300 employees and 500 medical personnel.

### Opportunity

Winchester Medical Center is the flagship hospital, offering a wide range of diagnostic, surgical and specialty care services, including a Level II Trauma Center. The five spoke hospitals within the Valley Health network are located in a rural and mountainous region, making access to care extremely challenging. Specialists were typically required to drive to each of the outlying areas to provide in-person care. Valley Health saw telehealth as a way to better deliver specialty care to remote locations. One of the health system's driving forces for the expansion of telehealth was the evolving landscape of healthcare, specifically the Bundled Payments for Care Improvement (BPCI) initiatives.



## Telehealth Service Lines



Crisis  
Care



Genetics  
Counseling



Chronic  
Disease



Patient  
Education



Oncology  
Consults



Neurology



Continuing  
Education



Transition  
Care Clinics

## Success

Valley Health has implemented a multidisciplinary telehealth program across service lines including chronic disease management, transition care clinics, oncology, neurology and education for both patients and staff.



## Chronic Disease Resource Center Expansion

Valley Health's main telehealth program is focused on patients with chronic diseases, specifically those with COPD, a complex disease that requires a certain level of patient self-management skills to monitor and treat effectively. Valley Health offers a comprehensive COPD patient education training program on the Winchester Medical Center (WMC) campus, covering topics including: how to use oxygen appropriately, medication management and how to cope with symptoms.

With the implementation of telemedicine, the training program is now offered virtually to all of the rural hospital sites. Patients who are admitted at WMC can now return home to their rural communities and receive training remotely. Without telemedicine, it would be difficult for this population to receive training due to distance and the fragile nature of patients with COPD.

## Transition Care Clinics Effectiveness

Valley Health transition care clinics provide primary care to patients that do not have a primary care doctor upon hospital discharge, regardless of payer. The initial visit is done in person, but follow-up is done virtually in a local clinic using a telemedicine cart and scope. Patients at the clinic are connected by video to a nurse practitioner for follow-up and are then referred to a community PCP in hopes of establishing a medical home for the patient. This model of care has shown significant improvement in cost avoidance measures.