



Using Consumer Feedback to Build a Robust Telemedicine Program



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Consumerism is changing the way healthcare is being delivered, and patients now value convenience as much as quality and cost. This is a large reason why health systems like [Nemours Children’s Health System](#), a pediatric health system with two free-standing hospitals located in Wilmington, Delaware and Orlando, Florida, and 90 clinical sites spanning five states invest in telehealth platforms.

Before Nemours invested in a telehealth program of our own, we wanted to understand consumer sentiments toward telehealth. Because we are a pediatric health system, “consumers” for us meant the patient as well as the parents. We conducted market research through [kidshealth.org](#), which is the most visited website in the world for children’s health information, and powered by Nemours. The results of this research helped us determine the key functionalities and design of our telehealth program, including:

- A platform that could be white-labeled with the trusted Nemours brand
- Capability to integrate with our Epic EHR
- Work within our scheduling system
- Ability to perform real-time eligibility checks

Nemours also conducted a second survey of families and found that 64 percent of parents used or planned to use telemedicine within the next year for their child. Of parents who have already tried an online doctor visit for their child, 98 percent said it was equivalent to or better than an in-person visit.

By all accounts, our patients and their families were ready for telehealth. After vetting telehealth vendors, Nemours partnered with [American Well](#) and launched its telehealth offering, Nemours CareConnect, in Florida, and since then has expanded the platform to Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and Georgia.

Educating consumers on telehealth

As part of our telehealth marketing strategy, Nemours began educating families about telemedicine. We again leveraged kidshealth.org to inform patients about the service, many of whom had still never heard of telemedicine. The messaging we developed was designed to speak to the parent and tell them when telehealth is more appropriate. We found that messaging around 24/7 care really resonated with parents and providing the right visuals for CareConnect also helped marketing efforts. Demonstrating the telehealth experience in a relatable manner—showing a child sick in bed in the middle of the night—helped the parents understand what the service was and how to use it. In addition, we integrated our messaging within our primary care offices, urgent care office and emergency rooms to facilitate education while visiting our brick and mortar sites.

Leveraging the trusted Nemours brand

During our consumer research, we found that more parents would be willing to use telehealth if it was associated with the trusted Nemours brand. When we launched CareConnect, we white-labeled the American Well platform with Nemours CareConnect.

Through [American Well's Exchange](#), Nemours has also been able to project our trusted brand to other areas and health systems. Nemours makes our pediatricians available on other healthcare systems' telehealth platforms, giving patients at other hospitals access to pediatricians online. This is particularly relevant to adult health systems that may not have pediatricians or pediatric experts on staff.

A family-approved online care experience

Since launching Nemours CareConnect to patients and their families, we have seen tremendous growth in telehealth usage. To date, more than 28,000 patients have enrolled in telehealth. Of those who had a telehealth visit, 64% reported that because they had access to CareConnect, they were able to avoid the higher-cost care they would have otherwise sought in the emergency department, retail clinic, or urgent care center. Families who used CareConnect also had an extremely high patient satisfaction rating, giving the platform 4.7 out of five stars.

The success of CareConnect can be largely attributed to the research we did into consumer sentiments on telehealth. Before launching a telemedicine program, it's essential to have a good understanding of patient perceptions, and use marketing and branding to help build awareness and drive results.