TELEHEALTH SUCCESSES
In Mississippi
MISSISSIPPI IS A NATIONAL LEADER FOR TELEHEALTH, AND THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL TELEHEALTH PRACTICES IN THE STATE.

Currently, most of Mississippi hospitals are providing some level of telehealth services, and many of the state’s primary care and outpatient care facilities are also delivering services via telehealth. Further, a growing number of large and small businesses are providing direct healthcare services to employees using telehealth connectivity.

This document is intended to assist in highlighting a number of successful, diverse uses of telehealth in Mississippi.
The Baptist TeleHealth Center allows providers to deliver care beyond the bedside using TeleGuardian© eICU, a remote monitoring technology that adds a new dimension of care and reassurance to patients and families by quickly identifying changes in a patient’s condition that may complicate recovery. This innovative program is a marriage between traditional remote patient monitoring programs and in-patient services, allowing community hospitals to have greater “backup” services and ability to monitor and care for patients.

This service connects technology, specialists, and the Baptist bedside care team to deliver a new dimension of care. TeleGuardian allows an intensivist or nurse to monitor a patient virtually—in real time—keeping constant vigil over data that reports the performance of a patient’s major body systems. Specially-trained ICU registered nurses (RNs), intensivists, and specialists work together to monitor the patient 24/7.

Intensive monitoring allows providers to detect even subtle changes in a patient’s condition. It also allows the patient to receive the level of care that they need closer to home, which can reduce the time that a patient is in the hospital and allow them to return to their normal daily activities quicker.

The patient’s doctor will make all the decisions regarding care with the benefit of this technology, which enables the care team to detect subtle changes and trends. Doctors will have a technical “sixth sense” to determine if a patient may be facing a crisis. In the absence of the patient’s physician, the TeleGuardian physicians can direct and assist our bedside care team.

TeleGuardian ensures full patient privacy despite a permanent in-room camera with audio that is only activated upon request by a nurse to check on a patient during “virtual rounding” or when an emergency requires a doctor’s immediate response. Otherwise, the camera is turned off, pointed away from the patient when not in use.

Baptist employs the TeleGuardian services at the following locations:
- Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women
- Baptist Memorial Hospital-Collierville
- Baptist Memorial Hospital-Union City
- Baptist Memorial Hospital-Union County
- Baptist Memorial Hospital-Tipton
- NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital
- Baptist Memorial Hospital-DeSoto
- Baptist Memorial Hospital-North Mississippi
- Baptist Memorial Hospital-Booneville
- Baptist Memorial Hospital-Golden Triangle

To learn more contact Katie Morrissette
Katie.Morrissette@BMHCC.org
The purpose of TeleSpecialty is to provide much-needed specialties to communities that otherwise would not have access to these specialties. TeleSpecialty allows patients to remain in their community while increasing treatment and overall experience for both the patients and their family.

TeleSpecialty clinics allow easier accommodation for providers as well. Locations include: Brookhaven, Cleveland, Indianola, Kosciusko, and Vicksburg, MS. St. Dominic’s TeleSpecialty Clinics have an overall patient satisfaction rating of 97%. St. Dominic’s recently implemented a 24/7 Virtual Care experience for their employees in efforts to provide quick, convenient care for minor urgent care conditions.

St. Dominic’s provides this service at no cost to those employees and dependents who are members of the St. Dominic Health Plan. These employees have the ability to visit a doctor online from their smart phone, tablet, or computer 24 hours a day. Visits are convenient, private, and secure. Prescriptions can be sent directly to their local pharmacy if medically necessary.

To learn more contact Robert Weathersby rweathersby@stdom.com

T1 provides a number of telehealth services, such as: Tele-Hospitalist, Tele-Psych, Tele-ICU, Tele-ER, and Telehealth Outpatient Clinic for population health, long term care, and remote patient monitoring.

These services allow T1 to improve patient outcome, leverage limited provider resources, address workforce recruitment and retention needs, reduce cost of health care service delivery, provide 24/7 access to care, improve flow within emergency departments, enhance community coordination of care, and more.

To put in perspective, T1’s hospitalist solution can save health systems a combined $1M per year. The Tele-Psych project enables any attending physician at a Hub facility to initiate a video conference connection with a licensed mental health professional located at one or more distant facilities. More than 5 million patients are treated in ICUs each year, and the Tele-ICU project enables intensivist physicians located at a facility to perform intensive care assessments via video conference to patients in rural hospitals.

Since 2010, 50+ rural hospitals in the U.S. have closed, partly because of lack of access to care, and currently, many others suffer from considerable pressures and are financially vulnerable. The Tele-ER project enables emergency and specialist physicians located at hub facilities to provide emergency care consultations via video conference to patients at distal points. For long-term care, facilities can avoid costs and fines for unnecessary transport and not lose patient-days for those patients in the hospital. Patients and their families experience an improvement in quality of life by reducing unnecessary transportation to the hospital for care.

To learn more contact Will Moon will.moon@t1telehealth.com
North Mississippi Medical Center is improving the health of the people in its region through telemedicine. Carts used to facilitate specialty visits for inpatient and outpatient services are now located in emergency rooms, nursing homes, swing bed facilities and multiple rural and local NMMC clinics. This service allows area residents access to services they would normally find in Tupelo and other large cities.

Currently, NMMC’s ambulatory telehealth consults are available in specialty areas such as psychiatry, mental health counseling, diabetes management, genetics, ortho-trauma, pulmonology, geriatrics, infectious disease, and sleep medicine. They also offer inpatient neurology and stroke management at all of their Mississippi and Alabama hospitals. Patients presenting to the emergency room with stroke symptoms or other neurological concerns are immediately evaluated by a nationally board-certified neurologist, which guides and expedites appropriate interventions.

North Mississippi Medical Center Eupora recently completed a telehospitalist pilot, allowing providers to receive additional physician support virtually for inpatients as well as our staff supporting our hospital partner at NMMC Pontotoc.

In March 2019, the program successfully completed a pilot, partnering the NMMC Tupelo emergency room doctors with providers at NMMC Pontotoc. This pilot allowed direct virtual oversight of team members of the critical access hospital through a protocol based triage assessment and assistance in handling complicated medical conditions facilitating appropriate transfers, admissions and local treatment. The success of this pilot led to eliminating a need for an outside contract company with replacement of local hometown providers who are connected and care about the community.

Not only are telehealth appointments convenient for patients, but also telehealth utilization reduces unnecessary medical transfer cost, patient transportation costs, anxiety, and discomfort associated with long trips and wait times. Since offering the service 3.5 years ago, the program has hosted over 9,000 visits, given back patients over 10,500 hours of their life and saved nearly 650,000 miles in patient travel.

Through the NMMC telemedicine program and its ever-growing list of services and specialties, members of our rural Mississippi communities have quick access to specialists and interventions otherwise unavailable at the local level.

To learn more contact Shannon Fryery sfryery@nmmc.net

North Sunflower Medical Center is committed to providing world-class care to all of the residents of the service area. They have the privilege and responsibility of taking care of everyone in need. In doing so, NSMC provides the same high standard of care to all citizens in and around Sunflower County.

One way of aiding the health of the community is with NSMC’s state-of-the-art telemedicine system. Through this, they provide 24-hour emergency services to the residents and visitors of Sunflower County and beyond with a combination of emergency physicians and specially trained nurse practitioners.

This tele-emergency system allows NSMC’s emergency room to gain full access to the skilled resources of the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson for consultation and treatment recommendations in real time live conversations. Their emergency staff also has access to a full service laboratory and radiology department staffed 24 hours daily.

Since offering the service 3.5 years ago, the North Mississippi Medical Center’s telehealth program has hosted over 9,000 visits, given back patients over 10,500 hours of their life and saved nearly 650,000 miles in patient travel.

To learn more contact Shannon Fryery sfryery@nmmc.net

North Sunflower Medical Center gained national attention in recent years for a highly innovative telehealth project in conjunction with the University of Mississippi Medical Center, focused on remote patient monitoring of the facilities most at risk diabetic patients. The pilot program resulted in tremendous reductions in A1C results as a result of monitoring and coaching.

To learn more contact Email Joanie Perkins joanie.perkins@northsunflower.com

North Sunflower Medical Center is also home to a robust remote patient monitoring program focused on target diabetes populations, again in conjunction with the University of Mississippi Medical Center. As the telehealth program at NSMC grows, their target is to continue to add specialty telehealth services in all areas of need for their patient population.
BankPlus, a Mississippi based financial institution, promotes and values the health and wellness of our employees. BankPlus first implemented Telehealth services in 2014, aligning with current health and wellness benefits. We wanted to offer our employees convenient healthcare access for minor medical issues.

As a Mississippi based company, they partnered with the University of Mississippi Medical Center to offer our employees a program through their corporate Telehealth services. BankPlus started with providing a Telehealth office and computer at each location, and have since transitioned to a mobile version of the program with extended hours.

BankPlus employees can use the telehealth services on-site or away from the office at no cost, saving them money on copays and other potential charges. Telehealth also saves employees time as most appointments take 15 minutes or less, and if used at the office, they do not have to use their personal time off.

One of our employees states, “I struggle with seasonal allergies. I have used Telehealth numerous times over the last few years to help me manage and troubleshoot some of those allergies and symptoms. It’s so easy and convenient.”

The addition of Telehealth to BankPlus’ suite of benefits helps offset some of the bank’s healthcare dollars along with allowing employees to save money and time on minor medical issues. Since implementing the program in 2014, the bank average 8% utilization each month and have seen an average of $60,000 in healthcare savings annually.

To learn more contact Emily Chance emilychancenbsn@bankplus.net

Pearl River County Hospital, located in Poplarville, MS, helps to deliver stroke-related services via Tele-stroke with Tulane Medical Center. The Tulane Expert teleConsulting (TEC) service allows physicians to quickly assess potential stroke patients and support the providers on site while also expediting acceptance and transfer to higher level of care when needed. Upon diagnosis, neurologists experienced in stroke care are brought to the bedside of patients via telemedicine.

Efficient care can save lives and improve the quality of life for stroke victims. Only 5.5 percent of stroke patients in the nation receive IV-tPA, the only FDA-approved medication treatment for ischemic stroke. In order to be administered safely and effectively, the medication must be given within 4.5 hours of the onset of symptoms. Telemedicine provides immediate access to stroke expertise when onsite access is not available.

The telemedicine program uses a mobile “robot,” which has an onboard computer, monitor, high-resolution camera and microphone. Within minutes, the local physician at Pearl River County Hospital and patient can communicate with an experienced neurologist who can interview and examine the patient and discuss the diagnosis and options for treatment with the patient, family members and treating physician.

Medical data, including imaging scans, can also be transmitted. The local physician and neurologist can then develop and initiate a treatment plan. Telemedicine, compared with telephone-only consultations, results in a more accurate diagnosis, better emergency decision-making, and fewer complications.

To learn more contact Kelli Acosta kelli.acosta@prc-med.com

The addition of Telehealth to BankPlus’ suite of benefits helps offset some of the bank’s healthcare dollars along with allowing employees to save money and time on minor medical issues. Since implementing the program in 2014, the bank average 8% utilization each month and have seen an average of $60,000 in healthcare savings annually.
Since June 2015, the Center for Telehealth at the University of Mississippi Medical Center has provided teleconsultations to evaluate and provide infectious disease care to patients diagnosed with HIV or AIDS housed in six prisons overseen by the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

Through the end of fiscal year 2019, more than 2,000 interactions were made via UMMC telehealth with patients at the Mississippi State Penitentiary, South Mississippi Correctional Institution, Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, East Mississippi Correctional Facility, Wilkinson County Correctional Center and Marshall County Correctional Facility. More than 400 patients, with an average 4.8 visits per person, received care.

As part of its national Telehealth Center of Excellence designation, UMMC is partnering with the University of Southern Mississippi to provide psychological assessment and psychotherapy/counseling services to patients in county jails.

To learn more contact Barbara Jones bfjones@umc.edu.

The Mississippi Department of Corrections is partnering with the University of Mississippi Medical Center and the University of Southern Mississippi to provide psychological assessment and psychotherapy/counseling services to patients in county jails.

Solid Ground Counseling and Recovery Center of Mississippi provides a safe, therapeutic environment with the latest evidence-based clinical care and therapeutic interventions for the Hattiesburg community and its surrounding areas.

Services offered include telemedicine, an in-house doctor, licensed therapist, and medical assistant. Solid Ground provides individual and couples counseling and specializes in Medicated Assisted Treatment (M.A.T.).

The organization believes that addiction is a chronic disease, and in order to support best recovery outcomes, the addiction must be treated in a long-term continuum of care which addresses not just the symptoms of the disorder but the underlying causes, conditions, behaviors, attitudes, values, family dynamics, purpose and direction of each individual.

Telemedicine supports Solid Ground by allowing treatment across a number of potential in-house meeting hindrances, such as a patient’s lack of in-house availability and a range of other factors.

While the organization aims to aid those suffering from addiction by providing appropriate clinical treatments, they also believe in providing resources, referrals, community support, educational and preventative platforms to further public understanding of addiction as well as reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health.

A Christian organization, Solid Ground believes that their specially trained providers help to promote the true healing comes from The Healer, and this is best done in a loving and Christ-centered environment.

To learn more contact Jessica Hobold jhobold@sgrecovery.com

Solid Ground utilizes telehealth and telepsych services to allow patients to gain greater access to needed counseling and treatment, to eliminate the stigma of seeking mental health treatment, and to break down the natural barriers that prevent patients from obtaining desired services.
The Center for Telehealth allows University of Mississippi Medical Center providers to examine and treat patients using live, two-way audiovisual technology, store-and-forward technology, and remote patient monitoring programs on computers, tablets and smartphones. UMMC is filling a void by providing telehealth through partnerships with community-based hospitals, critical access hospitals, clinician, community mental health clinics, community health centers, businesses, schools and colleges, prisons and patient homes. State employees and their families enrolled in the state insurance plan have access through its online minor medical/urgent care program.

UMMC telehealth reaches patients in all of Mississippi’s 82 counties, either in-home through remote patient monitoring, store-and-forward, or at clinic sites.

Telehealth-trained nurse practitioners are stationed in the emergency departments of 19 rural Mississippi hospitals treating patients via a multidisciplinary team that includes a board-certified emergency medicine physician on the UMMC campus.

Since its inception, the Center has serviced more than 500,000 patient encounters, providing remote, on-site access to multiple specialties, including urgent care, trauma, mental health, dermatology, cardiology, endocrinology, congenital heart, hematology/oncology, infectious diseases, Alzheimer’s and dementia care, as well as an array of pediatric specialties.

In 2017, UMMC was designated a Telehealth Center of Excellence by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. UMMC’s Center for Telehealth is serving as a national clearinghouse for telehealth research and resources. The Center has responsibility for creating a new knowledge base for telehealth through research. To date, HRSA has awarded UMMC more than $5 million to help build the necessary research infrastructure.

Today, UMMC Telehealth is working with a number of community partners and businesses specifically on employee health care programs designed to deliver both value to employees, via better access to care, and value to the company, in cost savings, improved performance and presenteeism.

To learn more contact Tony Tharpe atharpe@umc.edu

The University of Mississippi Medical Center was designated a Telehealth Center of Excellence by the Health Resources and Services Administration, UMMC’s Center for Telehealth is serving as a national clearinghouse for telehealth research and resources.