



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Saint Vincent Health System Delivers Telehealth Services Using Polycom Video to Expand Treatment, Reduce Rehospitalizations

Industry

Healthcare

Daily Use

- Patient-centered care
- Prevention and wellness programs
- Video collaboration for telecardiology and telestroke services
- Oncology care-team coordination and case management
- Collaborative patient rounds

Solution

- Expandable regional telehealth network that reduces rehospitalization rates
- Bluetooth electronic stethoscopes and digital CT scanners
- Unified communication, including video, voice, instant messaging, video asset management and Web conferencing

Results and Benefits

- Sustainable, self-funding programs for telecardiology and telestroke services
- Decreased rehospitalization instances for heart patients
- 100% ROI on obesity prevention program within 60 days of implementation

Overview

Founded in 1875, Saint Vincent Health System is a leading provider of healthcare services in the northeastern United States. Saint Vincent's staff has earned national recognition for its cardiac care, oncology, orthopedic services, pulmonary care, stroke treatment, critical care and many other services.

Beginning in 2008, Saint Vincent rolled out a sophisticated telehealth network using Polycom® RealPresence® video solutions to connect healthcare professionals and patients across 26 facilities in Pennsylvania. Saint Vincent's innovative telehealth services include a bariatric wellness program to educate and treat obese patients, collaborative telestroke care, and virtual patient rounds conducted by multidisciplinary teams of specialists.

Bringing Medical Care to the Underserved

Saint Vincent's telehealth program began with a \$1.7 million grant to deploy a regional telemedicine network. Connecting rural hospitals that have limited staffing and resources, the network provides access to teams of specialists who consult remotely and assist primary care physicians with evaluations and treatment recommendations.

Following a successful rollout of the basic network, Saint Vincent secured additional grants to fund a telecardiology service. Saint Vincent's innovative telehealth solutions include Bluetooth electronic stethoscopes which allow clinicians to listen to lung and heart sounds from hundreds of miles away. The service was quickly approved for Medicare, Medicaid and Blue Cross/Blue Shield reimbursement, making it a sustainable, self-funding service.

"Rural medicine is such a challenge due to the distances that must be covered and limited resources," said Philip Wolford, coordinator of Saint Vincent's regional telemedicine network. "Our telecardiology program is a great example of how Polycom video collaboration is helping to bring services to rural areas without the need for patients to travel."



We know how to treat people.®

“[Multidisciplinary] teams of doctors now collaborate remotely during grand rounds, exchanging observations, recommendations and patient information to improve and accelerate patient care.”

Philip Wolford, Coordinator of Saint Vincent’s regional telemedicine network

Focusing on Prevention and Wellness

Another highly successful telehealth program at Saint Vincent is their bariatric wellness program, a public education campaign that focuses on the prevention and treatment of obesity. Up to 30 people at a time participate in virtual educational sessions at their local facilities.

“Many patients who attend our educational sessions subsequently undergo bariatric surgery,” said Wolford. “While surgery isn’t right for everyone, these procedures are generating enough revenue to help us treat far more patients in rural communities than we ever expected. In fact, our bariatric wellness program paid for itself within a matter of weeks.”

Improving Stroke Treatment

One of the more exciting telehealth programs at Saint Vincent is the collaboration with a renowned nonprofit medical center to treat stroke patients. With 25 neurologists on call for this program and CT scans shared across the telehealth network, Saint Vincent patients are able to receive critical care in the minutes and hours immediately following a stroke.

Within four months of launching the program at one location, Saint Vincent successfully treated 65 stroke victims. That success led to an expansion of the program, which will include six facilities by the end of 2012.

Multidisciplinary Collaboration

Saint Vincent’s Polycom® RealPresence® Video Content Management solution is also helping enable greater multidisciplinary collaboration to improve patient treatment.

“Teams of doctors now collaborate remotely during grand rounds, exchanging observations, recommendations and patient information to improve and accelerate patient care,” explained Wolford. These grand rounds are recorded, archived and published for staffers to view later on-demand as part of their continuing medical education.

Saint Vincent also supports a weekly tumor board conference. Oncologists with a variety of specialties review malignant tumors to determine the best course of treatment, giving patients the benefit of having a team of experts examining their medical records.

Partner

BT Conferencing

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Product Listing

- Telepresence and Real-Time Collaboration
- Polycom® HDX® 8000 room telepresence systems
- Polycom® CMA® 4000 platforms for multipoint videoconferencing
- Polycom® DMA™ for load balancing, virtualization and distribution of calls
- Polycom® Video Border Proxy™ 200 E
- Polycom® RealPresence® Media Manager for video content management
- Polycom® RSS™ 4000
- Polycom® RealPresence® Capture Station

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Looking Ahead

Saint Vincent is now looking to its next telehealth innovation – chronic disease management. Diabetes is a major health issue in the communities that Saint Vincent serves. Many of these patients are hospitalized repeatedly just weeks apart.

“We are developing a 12-16 week program to educate and empower diabetics to take better care of themselves. The main goal is to prevent serious episodes and minimize rehospitalizations,” said Wolford.

Delivering Innovation for Healthcare

Healthcare organizations the world over are turning to video collaboration solutions to transform how they learn, teach and deliver care. Telemedicine solutions bridge the distances between patients and caregivers, between physicians and educators, and between medical facilities to reduce patient evaluation times, remotely treat patients, and improve medical education.

Eight of the top 10 hospitals and all of the top 10 pharmaceutical companies worldwide use Polycom technology to enhance caregiver productivity and quality of life, streamline hospital operations, reduce costs, and ultimately save lives.

About Polycom

Polycom is the global leader in standards-based unified communications (UC) solutions for telepresence, video, and voice powered by the Polycom® RealPresence® Platform. The RealPresence Platform interoperates with the broadest range of business, mobile, and social applications and devices. More than 400,000 organizations trust Polycom solutions to collaborate and meet face-to-face from any location for more productive and effective engagement with colleagues, partners, customers, specialists, and prospects. Polycom, together with its broad partner ecosystem, provides customers with the best TCO, scalability, and security for video collaboration, whether on-premises, hosted, or cloud-delivered. Visit www.polycom.com or connect with Polycom on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

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