



CASE STUDY: MEADOWS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Tele-ICU Helps Hospital Achieve an “A” Leapfrog Safety Grade, Reduce Unnecessary Transfers

Meadows Regional Medical Center is a 57-bed hospital with an eight-bed ICU in Vidalia, Georgia



THE CHALLENGE

ICU patient acuity at the rural hospital had steadily increased. More patients needed ventilators and were staying on them longer. In addition, high utilization over flu season often resulted in as many as 5-6 patients on ventilators in the ICU; the average had been 1-3.

While two pulmonary intensivists managed care for ventilated patients on weekdays and each covered one weekend per month, two weekends each month were left uncovered. As a result, Meadows Regional was frequently transferring patients to tertiary facilities in Savannah and Macon—90 miles away—or Augusta—100 miles away. In addition, the lack of coverage had resulted in a disappointing “C” Leapfrog grade: Improving that score was a top priority.

THE SOLUTION

The hospital chose Eagle Telemedicine to provide a core team of tele-intensivists to share ICU patient care management with onsite intensivists and hospitalists. The Eagle team covers the night and weekend gaps in ICU staffing, shares patient care management with the onsite team, and is available to assist with patient diagnosis and treatment via a cart with a videoconferencing monitor.

THE RESULTS

After the first nine months of the program, results are strong across the board.

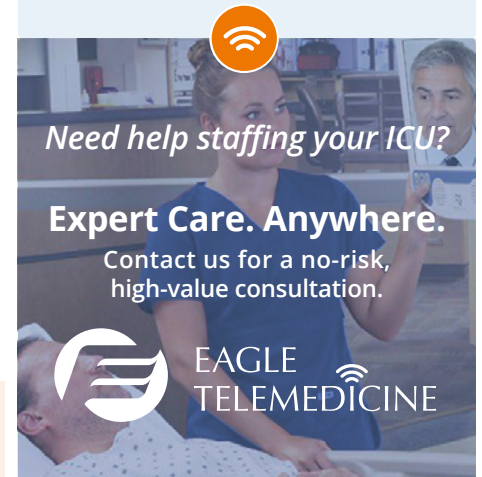
- **Total ventilator days are up.** The increase in ventilator days from 44.3 to 49.6 is a clear measure that the hospital is keeping more ventilated patients.
- **Ventilated days per patient are down.** The hospital is more efficiently weaning patients off ventilators, helping decrease risk factors such as ventilator-associated pneumonia. This is measured by the decrease in average ICU length of stay (ALOS) from 4.7 to 4.5.
- **Fewer patients are transferred.** With consistent, 24/7 ICU coverage by intensivists, the facility is able to keep more patients in their hometown hospital.
- **Leapfrog standards are up.** Previously, Meadows Regional was not hitting some of its marks in Leapfrog ICU quality reviews. But Eagle Telemedicine helped the hospital improve from a “C” to an “A” in less than a year’s time.
- **More frequent rounding.** Eagle’s methodology to round in the morning and again in the evening has made a positive impact in the ICU, where intensivists and hospitalists typically round once a day. Now, all ICU patients are evaluated in the morning, and again at 5:30 p.m. This not only doubles the opportunity for patients to leave the ICU for a standard inpatient bed, but also gives night nurses stronger direction and added confidence as they attend to patients on their shift.
- **Better throughput.** As more patients have their acuity level downgraded and are transferred to a standard inpatient care bed, the hospital can open ICU beds earlier, helping maintain optimum census levels, and relieving overload in the Emergency Department.
- **More satisfied staff.** Daytime ICU intensivists have greater flexibility and a comfort level knowing they leave their patients in the best possible hands when they take time off. Employee satisfaction scores have increased, especially among nighttime nursing staff.

KEY BENEFITS & OUTCOMES

- ✓ An “A” Leapfrog Safety Grade, Up from “C” the Previous Year
- ✓ Total Ventilator Days Up from 44.3 to 49.6
- ✓ ICU ALOS Down from 4.7 to 4.5

“We thought we might see a different face each time, but our Eagle team is a core group of three or four intensivists we see regularly. Nursing staff feels like they have a real camaraderie with them.”

KAREN MCCOLL, MD
VP FOR MEDICAL AFFAIRS,
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER



Eagle Telemedicine’s Tele-ICU program provides hospitals with a sustainable ICU solution for the long term.

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