



CASE STUDY: WESTERN WISCONSIN HEALTH

Critical Access Hospital Gains Stability and a Bright Future with Telemedicine

Western Wisconsin Health is a Critical Access Hospital in Baldwin, Wisconsin—population 4,000, about 30 miles east of Minneapolis. It includes 11 acute care beds, an obstetrics (OB) unit, a surgery unit, an emergency department (ED), and an attached rural health clinic.



THE CHALLENGE

The facility had a hospitalist program with two physicians covering the day shift, and a nurse practitioner (NP) covering evening and nighttime hours, but the NP's departure in 2017 made it difficult for the facility to find consistent overnight coverage.

THE SOLUTION

The facility's executive and clinical teams knew other hospitals that had Eagle Telemedicine programs in place, and after thorough review, began an Eagle TeleNocturnist program in 2017.

The Eagle physician team advises and provides support for one or two RNs and a certified nurse assistant (CNA) who cover the inpatient care (med/surg) unit at night. The RN house supervisor, ED, and OB nurses also work with the Eagle team on those nights when the med/surg patient load is heavy and they are needed to "float" to the unit.

Swing beds within the med/surg unit are often occupied by patients at the skilled nursing level. The Eagle TeleNocturnist team manages the care administered to these patients, too.

THE BENEFITS

- **Reduced transfers.** The facility does transfer critical care patients because there is no ICU, but it's a rarity, and the hospital is able to keep most patients who present at the ED and require inpatient care.
- **Sensible schedules for physicians.** There are now three hospitalists who work daytime hours, and they don't have to share night call responsibilities. "They are able to work through the day and then can go home and spend time with their families," Finder said.
- **Nursing support.** "The nursing staff love working with the Eagle team," Finder said. "They are always available, knowledgeable and able to answer any questions and help out with any situation."
- **Patient acceptance.** "Patients don't have any hesitation with having a telehealth provider versus having somebody physically present," Finder said. "They feel like they get great care."
- **Foundation for the future.** To offer specialty services to the community, the facility also uses telemedicine for behavioral health and stroke care, and has started using robotics in the surgical center. For Finder, who has worked at the hospital for 32 years, it's a promise for a successful future for Western Wisconsin. "We are absolutely headed in the right direction," she said.

KEY BENEFITS & OUTCOMES

- ✓ Fewer Transfers
- ✓ Less Stressed On-site Hospitalists
- ✓ Sustainable Staffing Solution

"The Eagle team is super friendly and professional, easy to work with, and more than willing to help with whatever we need."

MONA FINDER, BSN, RN, CPPS
CLINICAL PROJECT MANAGER



Are you losing sleep over night staffing challenges?
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Eagle Telemedicine's TeleNocturnist program provides hospitals with a sustainable solution for the long term.

