

# Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics: Telemedicine Improves 24-Hour Care for Higher Acuity Patients

## The Need: Physician Retention and Work-Life Balance

Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics was facing a common challenge among rural and small health systems — recruiting new providers. A number of tenured physicians were preparing to retire and those still on staff were reluctant to support patients on call, 24/7, as it interfered significantly with work-life balance.

The hospital had been very fortunate to recruit a highly skilled internal medicine provider, but with a young family with children, it was important for him that night hours be kept to a minimum. In an effort to retain this talented new physician, and to lessen the burden on other providers and staff, Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics looked for new options to cover night shifts, while continuing to provide quality patient care.

Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics also wanted to offset recruiting challenges with access to additional physician support while minimizing patient transfers to tertiary hospitals. With enhanced access to 24/7 quality care, the rural health system would be able to treat more patients locally — reducing patient leakage and improving overall healthcare support for the community.

## The Challenge: Finding the Right Telemedicine Fit

The rural health system began to evaluate options for night-time telemedicine support. But an initial trial with a larger telemedicine provider didn't meet expectations or deliver the necessary service.

With the larger telemedicine provider, there were a seemingly infinite number of physicians involved and every call was answered by someone different.

“We never got the same provider twice,” said Robyn Paulsen, Director of Telehealth, Community, and Business Development, Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics. “The technology was also inadequate, simply a small iPad attached to an IV pole. It was very hard for the team to manage patients with that process, and the technology felt unrefined.”

Because Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics has a very strong culture of service excellence, this new solution wasn't going to cut it. With high Press Ganey ratings, it was vital for the system to partner with a service that would meet the health system's superior standards.



Every call  
answered in  
**<3 minutes**



**Instant**  
text responses  
to care questions



**Fewer**  
patient transfers

## The Solution: Dedicated Eagle Telemedicine Team Improves Care and Reduces Transfers

Hoping to find a telemedicine partner more suited to their needs, Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics evaluated Eagle Telemedicine. The on-site staff was relieved they would have access to the same five Eagle physicians every time they had a patient need or question during the night. During Iowa Specialty's implementation, Eagle was also able to recommend a technology solution that would better serve the hospital's patients. The hospital's new cart features a large monitor (a much different approach than the small iPads they had attempted to use before), audiovisual capabilities, a high-resolution camera and e-stethoscope.

“We are now able to treat higher acuity patients that would have been transferred otherwise.”

- **Robyn Paulsen**, *Director of Telehealth, Community, & Business Development, Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics*

“The presence of the provider is lifelike, and it's easy for the staff to manage,” said Paulsen. “You can also see the TeleNocturnist has established a personal relationship with our hospital staff, with the kind of conversations you'd have in person, like how are your kids, etc.”

Even more, the Iowa rural healthcare system is impressed with the fast responses they receive from the Eagle TeleNocturnists that provide night shift staffing. The on-site teams are well acquainted with each of the Eagle providers, and in every instance, support is ready when needed.

“Every call has been answered instantly — always in less than three minutes,” said Paulsen. “Now, a nurse can text the Eagle TeleNocturnist and get a response right away.” The nurse can get the answer they need — and the patient gets care in real time — without waking up a local provider at 1 or 2 a.m. “That's great continuity of care,” adds Paulsen.

As a result of partnering with Eagle and implementing a TeleNocturnist program, Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics now have the resources to deliver quality care at night for higher acuity patients. As a result, the hospital has been able to exponentially reduce patient transfer rates, and can now deliver better care locally and improve patient outcomes without overtaxing on-site providers.

Eagle can help you elevate your patient care and enhance hospital and health system revenues with the dedicated telemedicine support that provides expert care, anywhere.

**Contact Eagle today.**

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### Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics

Located in north-central Iowa, this rural health system offers specialized care at their 25-bed Critical Access Hospitals in Clarion and Belmond, Iowa. The hospitals serve residents of this farming region due north of Des Moines and Ames. Today, both hospitals utilize Eagle's TeleNocturnist service.

### Eagle Telemedicine Benefits

- Dedicated, personal TeleNocturnist team of five
- Instant response and nursing support
- Secure two-way audio-video connection
- Improved patient care for high acuity patients
- Fewer patient transfers to tertiary hospitals
- Improved local provider retention and work-life balance

