



How Telemedicine Has Earned Nurses' Trust

The staffing and retention of nurses and other healthcare clinicians are among the top challenges that hospitals and health system management face today. Long hours, stressful conditions and heavy workload are exacerbating the nurse staff shortage.

According to a survey of 6,500 critical care nurses by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, 92% of respondents reported that the pandemic has “depleted nurses at their hospitals, and, as a result, their careers will be shorter than they intended.” In fact, 66% said they were considering leaving the profession because of their COVID-19 experience.

That's a loss our health systems, and patients across the country, truly can't afford.

The mounting physician shortage is also placing undue strain on nurses. Nursing staff, particularly in inpatient hospital settings, are increasingly strained by a lack of physician resources. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) **finds** that there will be an estimated shortage of up to 124,000 physicians by 2034. The extra burden often falls on nursing teams to shore up patient care while physician resources can be sourced.

Rising to solve the physician resource demand, and to relieve the pressure on nurses, is inpatient telemedicine. Telemedicine services can give nurses the on-demand physician resources they need to deliver care and improve patient outcomes. But nurse adoption of telemedicine hasn't come easily. Impersonal "doc in a box" telemedicine services have tainted nurse perception. But that is changing. New, high-value and personalized telemedicine services are winning nurses' trust. Here are four ways how.



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1

Telemedicine Offers Nurses On-Demand Expertise

Nurses are under constant pressure to accomplish a myriad of vital responsibilities that affect a patient's life. The potential of injuring a patient is the common worry among nurses and the nurse is often cited if something goes wrong with patient care, which can result in impact on a nursing license.

Medication errors are prevalent in patient care, and they can happen at any stage throughout the prescription, dispensing, or administration of a pharmacological therapy. Giving your staff the reassurance that they need to access physicians readily using telemedicine, can help nurses feel more secure knowing they can double check things for extra protection. As in the widely reported case of the Tennessee nurse that mistakenly administered a fatal dose of medication to a patient. The nurse could have accessed a physician if there were questions regarding the prescription and potentially avoided a critical error.

2

Telemedicine is Increasingly Personalized

Some “doc in a box” type telemedicine services have given telemedicine a bad rap among nurses. These more canned solutions serve up a different physician every time a request is made, making the connection impersonal and unpredictable which can place increasing responsibility on the nurse who has the in-person connection with the patient. But simply serving up the next doctor in the queue isn't a sustainable approach to telemedicine and new, more personalized, approaches are transforming the industry.

Now, customized inpatient telemedicine solutions are providing a dedicated team of physicians for each of the hospitals they support. Even though they may be “beaming in” from a different location, there is a consistency of care and approach that is developed when the same team of physicians is delivering telemedicine support. Just as if they were physically in the care facility, the same team or “pod” of physicians is always on call and available to nurse staff on demand. This builds valuable rapport and practice familiarity which can extend to delivering increasingly enhanced patient care.

3

Telemedicine Technology is Making Engagement Seamless

Legacy telemedicine solutions were delivered with physicians that didn't have the appropriate access to the hospital's native electronic medical record (EMR) solution. This added additional documentation and administrative strain for nursing staff as the telemedicine physician's instructions needed to be properly documented and integrated into the patient's chart.

More advanced telemedicine services have dramatically changed this technology approach. Now, no matter where they are working, many telemedicine physicians have direct and secure access to specific EMR used by the hospital they are supporting. This one-patient, one-chart telemedicine approach makes documenting patient care seamless and lightens the burden on in-person nursing staff.

Further, new interactive cart technology, with advanced cameras, displays, and network access, bring remote physicians right to the side of the patient emulating

4 Ways Nurses Trust Telemedicine

in person experiences. Telemedicine physician training and experience can offer a great “web-side” manner, where the patient-physician interaction is personal and engaging.

4

Telemedicine Delivers Care Faster

Physician and nurse staffing shortages have dramatically impacted patient wait times. Waiting longer for care will not only impact patient satisfaction, but outcomes as well. Patients are spending an average of 175 minutes getting care in emergency rooms at “very high volume” hospitals, according to Medicare data. Telemedicine can help reduce these wait times dramatically, particularly in the critical night-shift hours where it can be difficult to have enough physicians on staff for unexpected surges.

The best inpatient telemedicine services can deliver physician responses in minutes – in many cases shorter than the time to walk across the hospital! This on-demand access gives nursing staff and hospital clinicians the confidence that they can efficiently care for their volume of patients, no matter the hour, with a personalized and professional physician at the ready when they need them. Nurses no longer have to fret about contacting a daytime doctor in the middle of the night, for example, to address a patient’s need. Instead, they can engage telemedicine support to get prompt, high-quality treatment without the guilt of waking a staff physician on off hours.



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Without critical action, today’s nurses will work under extreme stress, care levels will suffer, and patient lives may be lost. By advancing care with modern telemedicine solutions, nurses are seeing needed relief, patients are waiting less, and health systems are seeing improvements in outcome metrics. Telemedicine physicians can deliver relationships, not transactions. By using the right telemedicine program, virtual physicians become an integrated part of the hospital care team and assimilate naturally as a valuable resource to enhance and help sustain the nursing practice.

If your hospital is seeking new ways to improve nursing staff workload to improve patient care and mitigate nursing burnout, Eagle has innovative telemedicine services to help.

Contact Eagle today.

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