

## CASE STUDY:

# Caring for More High-Acuity Patients Close to Home

Texas hospital deploys eight telemedicine service lines

### Overview

A hospital in rural Texas has **eight fully integrated inpatient telemedicine specialty service lines with Access TeleCare**. Its widespread adoption of specialty telemedicine is evidence of its commitment to innovating to serve its community and serves as a model for other rural hospitals wanting to expand their clinical services and improve their operational and financial performance.

**Since launching the state's first 100 percent virtual ICU in 2013**, the hospital has leveraged its use of telemedicine with comfort and success to significantly expand its specialty service offerings with the following results:



Ensuring that its community and surrounding regions can rely on their local hospital for a range of specialty care



Reducing the number of outbound transfers



Increasing its case mix index



Providing a sustainable workload for its outpatient physicians



The hospital launched the first 100 percent virtual ICU in Texas in 2013 with Access TeleCare. Relying on on-site nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, and virtual intensivists, the hospital fully staffed its ICU. Clinic physicians were alleviated from inpatient service and allowed the hospital 24/7 critical care capacity for seriously ill and post-surgical patients.



*"We provide 24/7 coverage with critical care physicians. In the past, we would transfer those types of patients to bigger hospitals for critical care. With telemedicine, since we have an intensive care unit, we're able to take care of those patients here, with a 24/7 presence by the physicians in the room."*

**-Hospital CEO**

## Expanding Services Through Telemedicine

Today, the hospital has eight inpatient specialty service lines delivered through telemedicine. The hospitalist program, for example, goes completely virtual for nighttime coverage. A teleNeurology team is available to provide both emergent stroke coverage and inpatient neurology care from admission through discharge for patients experiencing other neurologic disorders, such as seizure disorder. In addition, the hospital has a relationship with a nearby academic center to provide teleNephrology services while leveraging Access TeleCare's carts and technology solutions. Together the hospital and Access TeleCare also provide fully virtual care for behavioral health, infectious disease, antibiotic stewardship, and maternal-fetal medicine.



First 100 percent virtual ICU in Texas



Eight fully integrated telemedicine specialty service lines



Hybrid hospitalist program with telehospitalists for nighttime coverage



Primary stroke center designation from The Joint Commission with teleneurology coverage



## Implementation of Specialty Telemedicine Service Lines

**2013**

ICU and  
Pulmonary and  
Critical Care

**2017**

Hospitalist for  
nighttime  
coverage

**2018**

Neurology

**2019**

Behavioral Health

**2019**

Nephrology

**2021**

Infectious  
Disease

**2022**

Antibiotic  
Stewardship

**2022**

Maternal-Fetal  
Medicine



*“We’ve had overwhelming support from the community. The telemedicine services allow people to stay here. Otherwise, they would have to travel 75+ miles for care. When people come into the hospital and experience it firsthand, or with their loved ones, they really are appreciative of the services and that they allow them to stay here in their community.”*

**-Hospital CNO**



## CARING FOR MORE HIGH-ACUITY PATIENTS CLOSE TO HOME



### TeleHospitalist Program in Focus

Building on its first telemedicine program, teleICU, the hospital added nighttime telehospitalist coverage in 2017 to help alleviate pressures on its primary care physicians and ensure 24/7 capacity to admit patients, reduce transfers, and accelerate ED throughput. The Access TeleCare hospitalists fully integrate into the local care teams to deliver a seamless patient and provider experience.

### The Results



**Increased Case Mix Index:** Since the start of the program, the hospital's CMI has increased 21 percent, from 1.16 to 1.40.



**Increased Revenue:** Since the start of the program, hospital revenue has increased more than 60 percent as the hospital reduced outbound transfers and retained more complex patients.



**Superior Quality Outcomes:** In 2023, the hospital performed at the 95th percentile in Sepsis bundle quality scoring. The hospitalists themselves consistently perform at above 80 percent in their portion of the quality measure.