

CASE STUDY:

Fully Virtual Behavioral Health Services



Access TeleCare achieves superior patient outcomes, staff satisfaction, and operational efficiencies for **Oceans Behavioral Hospital Lake Charles**

Challenge

Hospital administration and on-site providers at Oceans Behavioral Hospital in Lake Charles, Louisiana were experiencing challenges with full-time, consistent staffing of psychiatrists and other psychiatric providers for its 20-bed inpatient facility and intensive outpatient program.

Multiple hurricanes devastating the region combined with the pandemic contributed to behavioral health professional shortages, gaps in service availability, and long wait times for area residents needing inpatient and outpatient behavioral health care. After inpatient discharge, patients were experiencing wait times of four to six months for outpatient, follow-up treatment, increasing the likelihood of relapse and inpatient readmission.

Solution

A fully virtual behavioral health program with Access TeleCare gave the facility much-needed capacity to care for its inpatients and provide timely follow-up, step-down outpatient treatment. With Access TeleCare's partnership, Oceans Lake Charles is now able to provide outpatient treatment within 7 to 10 days. In addition, with a dedicated pod of multiple psychiatric providers, there are no gaps in care for behavioral health patients if a psychiatrist is out sick or busy with his or her own practice. A psychiatric professional is available whenever the facility needs one.

About Oceans Behavioral Hospital Lake Charles



20-bed inpatient facility for adults



Intensive **outpatient program** for adults



Serves **Southwest Louisiana**



Part of **Oceans Healthcare**, serving patients in Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas

"Fully virtual psychiatric professionals working hand-in-hand with on-site nursing and operations staff is a win-win for today's behavioral health hospitals needing to manage an unprecedented need for their services amid a severe ongoing shortage of psychiatric professionals."

Chris Gallagher, M.D.

Founder and Chief Strategy Officer, Access TeleCare



Telemedicine Program That Supports On-Site Staff and Enhances Quality and Utilization Management Functions

When Oceans Lake Charles first introduced the teleBehavioral health program with Access TeleCare, on-site teams initially were somewhat skeptical. They worried about patient resistance and dissatisfaction with remote clinicians, workflow disruptions, and reliable clinician coverage.

Through full integration with the facility's EMR, secure messaging platform, and Access TeleCare's easy-to-use technology, the team's initial skepticism dissipated as they realized that Access TeleCare's approach to care delivery was the solution to their capacity challenges, not an obstacle to overcome.

"It's been a great partnership with Access TeleCare. They go above and beyond to make sure they're very much part of our team, and their providers make sure we are their priority. They have truly exceeded expectations."



Misty Kelly, RN, MSN

Administrator
Oceans Behavioral Lake Charles

Prior to Access TeleCare, nursing and executive leadership were spending a disproportionate amount of time managing provider schedules and working around providers' scheduling needs and availability. If a provider was unavailable for whatever reason, a patient might miss out on rounding or experience a delay in being admitted. With the transition to Access TeleCare, staff almost immediately experienced a shift with the Access TeleCare providers being easy to reach, readily available and responsive, and flexible as urgent needs emerge.

"With patients coming into our facility day and night needing admission, the Access TeleCare team always has someone available for us. They're very

responsive to what we need, even if we need middle-of-the-night help with medications. They're just a phone call or click away. They really seem to cater to us," said Justin Goodfriend, RN, MSN, director of nursing, Oceans Behavioral Lake Charles.

The partnership also gives on-site staff access to a larger operational apparatus, including medical director, to help with utilization review and management, quality measurement and improvement, and ongoing education and professional development. For example, the Access TeleCare psychiatric medical director participates in the facility's quality and performance improvement meetings, helping the facility look at ways to reduce falls, minimize violence outbursts, adjust medication protocols, and other activities that are not directly patient-facing but impact patient safety, quality and outcomes, and patient satisfaction.

With insurers increasingly limiting coverage of behavioral health inpatient stays sometimes just to three days, documentation of the need for ongoing inpatient treatment is essential. For the Oceans Lake Charles team, having the Access TeleCare partnership is a significant help.

"The Access TeleCare team is available even on the weekends or holidays to help with insurance documentation. They're always available and open to talking with me to answer questions or help explain to the insurance company why they're leaning toward a certain type of treatment or need a stay to be extended."



Phyllis Williams, RN

Utilization management director
Oceans Behavioral Hospital Lake Charles

Access TeleCare's teleBehavioral Health Program Delivers:



Daily rounding and on-call coverage for inpatients plus psychiatrist medical director oversight.



Full integration and coordination with on-site clinical, quality, and utilization management staff



Warm hand-off and ongoing **continuity of care** with outpatient treatment