

When Recurrent Pneumonia Signaled a More Serious Diagnosis



How Access TeleCare's teleInfectious Disease coverage helped identify advanced HIV and initiate life-saving treatment

Key Outcomes

The Case

A 40-year-old patient presented to a 20-bed community hospital with recurrent pneumonia and worsening shortness of breath. She had been admitted to other hospitals several times for pneumonia-related symptoms, but the underlying cause had not been identified.

The patient was requiring oxygen and was markedly tachypneic, breathing approximately 40 times per minute. Her clinical presentation, oral thrush, abnormal laboratory findings, and imaging raised concern for a more advanced, opportunistic infection rather than routine pneumonia.

After reviewing the patient's chart, clinical history, laboratory results, imaging, and bedside findings, Access TeleCare's team recognized a constellation of findings consistent with pneumocystis pneumonia, a potentially severe infection most commonly associated with HIV infection.

The Care Plan

Access TeleCare's infectious disease specialist immediately recommended HIV testing and initiation of empiric treatment for pneumocystis pneumonia. The patient's HIV test later returned positive, confirming the underlying immunocompromised state that explained her recurrent pulmonary infections and clinical course.

For the onsite team, the teleInfectious Disease consult provided immediate diagnostic direction, treatment guidance, and escalation support. Instead of continuing to treat the case as recurrent pneumonia without a clear cause, the onsite clinical team had access to specialty-level interpretation of the patient's symptoms, diagnostic findings, and risk factors in real time.

The Result

Access TeleCare's teleInfectious Disease consult helped identify a serious, previously unrecognized, potentially life-threatening diagnosis and guided the onsite team toward the appropriate next steps in care.

The case demonstrates the clinical value of infectious disease expertise in community hospital settings, where patients may present with complex, atypical, or recurrent infections that require subspecialty-level diagnostic reasoning.



Uncovered the underlying cause of recurrent pneumonia



Accelerated diagnosis and treatment planning



Supported timely testing, targeted therapy, and care escalation



Empowered onsite clinicians to manage a complex case



Brought expertise to the bedside when it was needed most

"Community hospitals are often asked to manage patients with complex conditions or presentations without immediate access to infectious disease expertise. In this case, teleInfectious Disease support helped the onsite team move from continuing to treat recurrent pneumonia to the correct diagnosis, begin targeted treatment, and escalate care at the right time. That is the value we bring: timely, accurate diagnoses so that patients get the care they need."



WATCH THE VIDEO
Scan the code to hear the full story from Dr. Le

Jade Le, M.D.

Chief of Infectious Disease
Access TeleCare

