

# HealthPoint's 360-Degree Optimization of Virtual Care

## THE CHALLENGE

### Get telehealth off the ground

To provide effective virtual care to a large and diverse patient population, HealthPoint needed telehealth capabilities for nearly 250 provider users and more than 200 support users. The roster included medical providers and residents, behavioral health consultants, home health coordinators, dental specialists, dieticians, and clinical pharmacists.

To enable providers to quickly engage in virtual visits, a cross-functional team with representatives from information services, regional leadership, operations, and clinical programs initiated the implementation process. Two pilot sites were selected. The business directors, site managers, billing staff, clinical managers, and front-office supervisors at these locations played instrumental roles to incorporate telehealth. The team's collaborative effort helped to define workflows and achieve buy-in throughout the organization with full support from the top down.

"We understood it was a new tool, which meant we had to create space for people to practice and learn," said Julie Colin, MD, senior clinical informaticist at HealthPoint. "It wasn't going to be an easy fit for some patients because of significant language considerations, and not all of our patients have the tools and technical literacy."

## THE SOLUTION

### A partner helps meet specific needs

"HealthPoint's partnership with NextGen Healthcare was foundational," said Dr. Colin. The team received assistance throughout implementation. For example, NextGen Healthcare provided enhancements that enabled patients who were minors to be scheduled and join their telehealth visit where it was legally appropriate to do so in Washington and configure event types accordingly.

HealthPoint was also able to associate additional language instructions and hyperlinks into their notifications for appointments. "We made it possible for patients who speak Arabic, Punjabi, Marshallese, and Somali to review pre-visit requirements in their language and prepare for their virtual visits," said Dr. Colin.

Throughout implementation and later on in the optimization phase, HealthPoint made their lessons learned along with trainings and reference materials readily available to assist users.

## CLIENT PROFILE

### HealthPoint

- Founded in 1971, HealthPoint is a community health center that serves approximately 100,000 patients—90 percent identified as low-income, and a third of the patients are under 18 years of age
- Operates 18 locations in Washington State in communities where more than 70 languages are spoken
- Offers primary medical care, dental care, prenatal care and delivery, behavioral health, substance use disorder treatment, acupuncture, osteopathic manipulative treatment, urgent care, and COVID-19 testing
- Provides education and training for approximately 180 dental, medical, and behavioral health students, interns, and residents

### NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE SOLUTION

- NextGen Virtual Visits™

## HIGHLIGHTS



More than **6,382 virtual visits** between April and December 2020



**250 providers** and more than 200 support users engaged in telehealth



**Direct patients** to pre-visit information in Arabic, Punjabi, Marshallese, and Somali

## Support user role in the virtual visit

HealthPoint's objective was to provide a telehealth experience similar to an in-office visit. The NextGen Healthcare virtual visits solution offers a support user role. The medical assistants, dental assistants, and in-house interpreters received training to manage the variances in telehealth workflows. They soon conducted the intake process virtually, in advance of the virtual visit, as close as possible to how they would if the patient was in an exam room.

## Types of visits appropriate for virtual care

To decide what types of appointments would be best suited for virtual visits, HealthPoint appointed two representatives from each healthcare discipline to create starter workflows and scripts for telehealth. Training sessions included recommendations for types of visits that providers can engage in virtually to grow in familiarity with telehealth.

Clinical leadership deferred to virtual visits, limiting in-office visits to vaccines, procedures, and patients for whom a face-to-face visit was essential for care. Behavioral health and nutrition visits transitioned from the telephone to virtual visits as long as the patient was comfortable engaging with their providers via their smartphone or computer.

Dental services used virtual visits for triage to determine if patients needed to come in to the office for urgent care. Dentists also used telehealth to educate their patients in oral healthcare.

## Use what we have

When HealthPoint implemented their telehealth capabilities, they were in the middle of substantial IT projects such as hardening security and transitioning to a virtual desktop infrastructure. Virtual visits added to the complexity by requiring the deployment of one hundred extra laptops and exam room set up appropriate to deliver virtual care within the clinic. There were significant supply chain issues, which added to the challenges of readiness for virtual visits. Staff were trained on how best to "use what you have" whether at home or on-site, which initially included use of personal devices. Training emphasized aligning the right device, browser, microphone, and camera settings based on where and what equipment was being used.

"We made sure care team members knew about the device and connection guide and technical support," said Dr. Colin. "The goal was to prepare them to succeed with what was available to conduct virtual visits."

"We made it possible for patients who speak Arabic, Punjabi, Marshallese, and Somali to review pre-visit requirements in their language and prepare for their virtual visits."

**Julie Colin, MD**  
Senior Clinical Informaticist  
HealthPoint



## THE RESULTS

Virtual visit conversion was an organizational initiative and a high priority in the fight against the pandemic. HealthPoint's goal of 1,000 virtual visits within two-months was exceeded by almost three times. In fact, HealthPoint conducted more than 6,382 virtual visits between April and December 2020.

### Patient conversion and continuous refinement

Front-office staff, providers, and medical assistants worked together to get patients on board with virtual visits. The goal was to have the care team on the same page with communications and procedures to convert them to telehealth comfortably.

"It was vital that our front office understand telehealth and the technical dependencies to have an optimal experience, so that they can advocate and share that opportunity with patients when they schedule a visit," said Dr. Colin.

Weekly telehealth progress reports were shared with all users that highlighted tips and positive experience comments from care team members. Clinics that had the greatest percentage of providers who used virtual visits, the highest percentage of virtual visits out of their whole visit schedule, and the most significant improvement in the percentage of virtual visits were recognized.

"We continually look for opportunities to improve the experience for our staff and patients," said Dr. Colin. "We want to make sure HealthPoint utilizes all the benefits available from virtual visits."

### Lessons learned

- Prepare your front office to promote telehealth
- Utilize clinic champions to support adoption
- Develop a communication plan to support virtual visit conversion
- Have IT operations staff available to help resolve issues
- Be flexible
- Align with organizational goals

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## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Partner with us at **855-510-6398** or **results@nextgen.com**.