

Nursing Collaboration at the Center of 21st-Century Care

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While traditional healthcare delivery systems struggle to stay alive and fiscally viable, new, more agile systems are constantly emerging to answer the question “How do we deliver high-quality care that responds to patient needs in a fiscally lean business model?” Not only must we answer this question to care for population health, we must answer it to deliver care that will fill the yawning gap left by accelerating hospital closures and shrinkage.

Convenient care providers are on the front lines of changing healthcare delivery. We believe that our telehealth solution gives those providers a powerful tool to expand that care.

Optimized Care Network (OCN) believes that nursing and telehealth offer unique pillars on which to build successful, responsive healthcare delivery that will meet the challenges of today, including:

- An increasingly complex and uncertain healthcare environment in which health systems and payers struggle to find new and better ways to reach and retain patients.
- American consumers are in search of care models that seamlessly integrate into their busy lives.

- Patients expect care that is high-quality, affordable, and, perhaps most importantly, convenient in a 21st century manner, which means electronic.
- Health systems that are rooted in tradition are challenged to innovate in order to compete in this new sector, or they risk losing patients.

Patient demand is driving an explosion of telehealth solutions despite provider hesitancy to adopt them. Patients want healthcare that is electronic, rapid, and easily accessible. In fact, healthcare is the only service sector still dragging its heels and resisting the move to robust electronic interface with its user market. Even the deeply traditional banking industry has made the transition to electronic access and online services.

OCN does not believe that telehealth works at odd ends to traditional healthcare. We do not accept the assumption that patients must choose between a traditional office setting and a newer, convenient (if impersonal) option for seeking care. Our new partnership with The Ohio State University College of Nursing (OSU CON) proves cutting edge technology can be integrated into existing healthcare delivery structures to offer a superior patient and provider experience while also controlling healthcare costs.

- By removing the limitations of traditional geographic and logistical barriers, OCN and OSU CON are able to deliver evidence-based primary and specialty care to

underserved patient populations that previously had limited access to care.

- Care coordination is streamlined with the help of the RN Care Coordinator (RNCC), who facilitates connections to specialists and other referral sources.
- Clinicians can improve their work-life balance by practicing virtually while still maintaining a rewarding clinical practice.
- Most importantly, patients are connected to care that is affordable (thanks to flexible payer structures), accessible (located in their home communities or workplaces), and high-quality.

This partnership is revolutionizing healthcare delivery and can serve as a model for other healthcare systems looking to innovate.

Here's how it works:

The OCN telehealth solution places patients at the center of care, where they belong.

This is accomplished through the use of PresenceCare: a 3-dimensional video technology which projects the remote provider directly into the CareSpace, enabling face-to-face, eye-to-eye virtual interaction between patient and provider. Unlike typical videoconferencing platforms, PresenceCare makes maintaining eye-to-eye contact natural for both patient and provider, removing the distraction of multiple picture-in-picture screens.

The technology enables the collaboration of multidisciplinary teams in real-time without requiring in-person presence, so family members, specialists, pharmacists, and other allied health personnel can participate in a patient's visit. Increased access and coordination of care vastly improves patient outcomes, making it easier to meet industry standards.

The OCN telehealth visit hinges upon the presence the RNCC in the CareSpace, who will remain with the patient throughout their entire experience. The RNCC acts as the "hands" of the remote provider, performing a guided physical exam of the patient with the assistance of specialized digital exam equipment and assisting with documentation and patient education. The patient is able to view exam images in real-time, and the provider-nurse-patient triad works together to provide a care experience to the patient that is high-tech, yet also high-touch.

An innovative partnership for a new generation of nurses

The OSU CON has long been known for its record of excellence, producing highly skilled graduates who are leaders in the field of nursing. OSU CON is an innovative, forward-looking institution that seeks to expose students to the newest technology in order to prepare them to work and succeed in a rapidly changing healthcare industry.

These qualities and values made OSU CON an excellent strategic partner for OCN. Together we have developed a

partnership that aims to prepare a generation of nurses to deliver telehealth in a variety of settings to solve a number of existing problems.

OSU CON faculty members are well-positioned to recruit and train clinicians to provide virtual care. The College's vast network of graduates and faculty is a world-class source of clinical talent.

As OSU CON is an established leader in nursing education, they were a natural choice when developing the curriculum to train OCN's team of RNCCs and clinicians. OCN and OSU CON have worked together to create a comprehensive training program to ensure that nurses and clinicians working in the telehealth space have the technical training, clinical skills, and ongoing support that they need to function in this non-traditional role.

Our partnership begins with the education of both undergraduate and graduate nursing students. Faculty members at OSU CON use PresenceCare technology to educate students both at a distance and on campus. Faculty can use the equipment to construct standardized patient simulations, demonstrate physical exam maneuvers and findings to lecture halls full of students, or to observe distance learning students performing newly learned clinical skills. Students become comfortable with the technology that is integrated into their courses and emerge with a skillset that other new graduates have no exposure to in school.

The power of telehealth to prevent burnout

The catch-22 faced by the healthcare industry is that as Baby Boomers age and enter the healthcare system they are retiring from the same industry in record numbers. The U.S. will face a primary care shortage by the year 2020 and clinicians are already reporting record percentages of burnout. It's time for healthcare to find better ways for its clinicians to provide responsible, quality care while creating opportunities for work-life balance. OCN believes the answer lies in offering flexible schedules and work-from-home options.

A few specialties, like radiology, have pioneered distance work arrangements that provide increased flexibility for clinicians without sacrificing clinical acuity or patient care experience. Now is the time for healthcare to act on and expand these opportunities to other disciplines.

The effectiveness of in-person care combined with telehealth

OCN believes that our telehealth solution offers the best of both worlds: in-person and remote care. We know that the best care for patients happens when the provider is physically present to conduct exams and provide education. When telehealth technology is combined with the RNCC who is present with the patient, OCN clinicians are able to make high-level clinical decisions virtually, with confidence in their findings. This means that clinicians can

practice from locations that are convenient for them, often placing their access sites in their own homes. Others continue to practice from their main clinic or office setting but use the OCN telehealth model to serve patients in multiple remote locations, reducing drive time for clinicians while expanding system reach. When clinicians can decrease or eliminate their commutes and adjust their practice schedules to fit personal and family needs, many are willing or even eager to work nontraditional hours requested by patients.

In telehealth, everyone benefits

Early adopters of the OCN telehealth model immediately see the benefits in both delivery of care and ROI. Payers and employers have shown a willingness to embrace this new care model, and often cite confidence in OSU CON and their track record in educating nurses as a foundation of their decisions. We have found that both employers and payers respond positively to having access to these clinicians when planning care for their populations.

As convenient care locations expand, this telehealth model is poised to complement the industry's growth. It combines the best of traditional healthcare with the essential fiscal economies required. We believe it is the future of healthcare delivery and we believe that it is the only model that will make headway in convincing traditional providers to adopt telehealth delivery.