

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

The benefits of maternal-fetal telehealth services



One of the nation’s leading providers of healthcare services, HCA Healthcare is made up of locally managed facilities that include 185 hospitals and 119 free-standing surgery centers located in 21 U.S. states and the United Kingdom.

In one market, HCA Healthcare operates nine external maternal-fetal medicine (MFM) sites, along with several internal MFM sites. In this market, HCA Healthcare began its maternal-fetal telehealth programs three years ago, leveraging seven specialists to grow MFM productivity and access without sacrificing provider work-life balance.

The Challenge

There are several rural communities without access to MFM specialists—often the closest MFM clinic is located 50-150 miles away. This lack of access creates an additional burden for physicians during standard obstetrician (OB) or family practice (FP) visits: anytime an abnormality is observed, physicians must decide if it is worth the mother’s time and money to travel to the specialty MFM clinic.

Due to these challenges, many rural OBs and FPs often work outside their comfort zones to safely manage their patients. In response, HCA Healthcare initially opened community MFM clinics to support their rural community hospital partners. This required specialists to travel 1–2 hours (in each direction) daily to cover these clinics.

In order to better maximize the time and capabilities of MFM specialists and to best meet the needs of patients in rural communities, HCA Healthcare looked to utilize telehealth to extend their reach.

The HCA Healthcare team focused on finding a way to navigate the unreliable connectivity in rural Texas communities. Conversations occurring during high-risk MFM visits can be delicate, and it was important to the team to ensure the technology had no negative effects on patient experiences. Of the highest priority were dependable audio/video connections to ensure high-quality communication and ease of use to maintain efficient workflows.

50–150

miles to closest MFM clinic

Many patients cannot afford to travel to MFM clinics due to:

- Inability to miss work
- Additional childcare expenses
- Lack of vehicle access

Monthly averages:¹

Total patient visits in 2019:

11,000

Patient travel time saved

144 minutes round trip

Total patient travel time saved:

26,000 hours

Clinic visit time:

45–60 minutes

The Solution

HCA Healthcare made security and reliability primary criteria when selecting a technology partner to ensure that all telehealth visits were at or above the same standard as an in-person encounter. Providers wanted to ensure the technology was able to support delicate conversations without interruption. It was important for the patient to feel comfortable and engaged with the remote provider, just as they would if they were in the same room with her. The prior technology solution underwhelmed patients and undermined their confidence in the consultation and the solution's security and capabilities.

HCA Healthcare chose Teladoc Health to partner with its TeleMFM program because of its service and reliability. Because of its previous relationship with the Teladoc Health Stroke Solution, the HCA telehealth services team felt confident Teladoc Health could meet all its needs.

Although HCA Healthcare's MFMs reported that 90% of the time providers do not need to lay hands on a patient, they still needed portable, efficient technology that they could control—specifically, where the camera is looking. The Teladoc Health Vici was purpose-built for clinic locations and gives remote providers the feeling of being in the room.

The Results

After starting a maternal-fetal medicine telehealth program, HCA Healthcare was able to turn hours of specialist windshield time into patient visits—providing more available days to communities because their MFMs covered multiple rural clinics from one hub location. On average, 94% of patients seen in the TeleMFM clinics remain in their home community for care and delivery.

These positive results are attributed to providing patients the high-risk care and management they need, making it possible for them to experience healthier pregnancies and deliveries. Those patients who need to be delivered at a tertiary facility are able to be identified earlier, before it becomes an emergent transfer, and often can be transferred early or have a scheduled delivery at the tertiary facility.

HCA Healthcare is committed to improving the lives of its patients and providers. Telehealth provides a platform to do both. With the program's success, HCA telehealth services is always thinking of new creative ideas to solve more problems with telehealth.

¹Over 9 clinics, 2019.

²Over 12 months, 2019.

“We immediately turned to Teladoc Health for a solution that would be reliable and ultimately would exceed the expectations of everyone involved.”

Maggie Lajaunie, HCA Women's & Children's Telehealth Director, HCA Healthcare

Observations over nine markets one year prior and one year after TeleMFM found:

94%

of patients stayed in their home community to deliver

2,330

physician windshield hours saved²

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TeladocHealth.com | engage@teladochealth.com

About Teladoc Health

Teladoc Health is the global virtual care leader, helping millions of people resolve their healthcare needs with confidence. Together with our clients and partners, we are continually modernizing the healthcare experience and making high-quality healthcare a reality for more people and organizations around the world.

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