

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

# Building a highly effective telehealth program in a multispecialty medical group



Sharp Healthcare, a not-for-profit health system serving 3.2 million residents of San Diego County, is the largest health system in San Diego with seven hospitals, two skilled nursing facilities, home care and hospice, a health plan, three affiliated medical groups, and 2,600 affiliated physicians.

## The Challenge

Patient access to specialty care is a challenge. Providers did not want to unnecessarily send their patients to specialty doctors but also did not want to potentially miss a critical issue.

To address these demands, Sharp Healthcare began assessing telehealth solutions. Telehealth would improve peer-to-peer communication and more efficiently direct patients to the appropriate provider. On top of the benefits for patients and clinicians, Sharp Healthcare looked to telehealth to enhance their patient catchment, patient retention, efficiency, and effectiveness in a highly capitated, advanced managed care market.

## The Solution

Central to selecting Teladoc Health was the ease at which the platform could meet patients where they are while improving the peer-to-peer experience of providers.

Other factors included:

- White-label ability
- Ease of use
- Simple training
- Immediately accessible to patients

### Telehealth benefits

#### Saves time

so patients don't need to leave work or schedule childcare

#### Saves commuting costs

by removing travel times and fees

#### Reduces exposure

during cold and flu season

#### Provides a more focused visit

between provider and patient

### Care model workflow



Appointment set and invitation link sent to patient



MA opens link, connects to patient



Warm transfer to physician with no waiting time

Sharp Healthcare placed an emphasis on timely patient care. Because the majority of consults were follow-up appointments without the need for physical exams, simple audio/video connections were sufficient to interact with patients and update their progress and recovery, as well as to help significantly decrease no-show rates.

This care model was successful due to technology adoption by both patients and providers, the simple training process, the technical support provided, and making patients and clinical users familiar with the new technology platform.

Additionally, Sharp Healthcare fostered physician champions to drive adoption and program success due to the minimal training required, easily adopted workflow, and the emphasis on the patient experience through communication, encouragement and support.

## The Results

Overall, the Sharp Healthcare telehealth programs saw strong results and achieved success. This is attributed to several factors: defined governance, long-term approach taken, emphasis on operations, and committed funding.

Monthly oversight helped to keep overall program progress on-track and ensured lessons learned from both successes as well as failures. Also, Sharp Healthcare was careful to only implement virtual visits when appropriate — some visits are best handled in person and video visits can easily be converted into an office appointment.

The success achieved in initial use cases have sparked additional program development, in part due to the organizational support given to the program, as well as clinical champions inspiring their peers to adopt the technology for their specialties.

### Sharp telehealth specialty programs:

- Behavioral health
- Cardiology
- Clinical pharmacy
- Dermatology
- Endocrinology
- ENT
- Family medicine
- General surgery
- Hematology/oncology
- Internal medicine
- Neurology
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopedics
- Palliative care
- Pediatrics
- Podiatry
- Population health
- PT and rehab
- Urgent care
- Urology

### Telehealth program by the numbers (2018–2019):

201

physicians performed a virtual visit

1,018,334

secure messages

13,378

virtual (phone/video) visits

## LEARN MORE

[TeladocHealth.com](https://TeladocHealth.com) | [engage@teladochealth.com](mailto: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.

**Teladoc**  
HEALTH