

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

The benefits of virtual neonatology: SSM Health Cardinal Glennon's TeleNICU Program



Located in St. Louis, MO, SSM Health is one of the largest Catholic healthcare systems in the country and is comprised of hospitals and clinics in MO, IL, WI and OK. SSM Health Cardinal Glennon's telemedicine program started in 2012 with a grant to fund Maternal Fetal Telemedicine. 2013–2014 was the genesis for their virtual neonatology outreach program (TeleNICU) and virtual emergency programs (TeleED). SSM Health Cardinal Glennon now offers eight telemedicine programs across 53 partnering hospitals and clinics.

The Challenge

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon consistently receives newborn transfers for conditions which could be treated at the local facility if there was access to specialist expertise. Access to neonatologists virtually would eliminate the additional healthcare costs of unnecessary transport, reduce the stress between mother and baby, and provide additional intervention in life-saving situations.

In order to help triage appropriate neonatal transfers, SSM Health Cardinal Glennon looked at telehealth solutions. Additionally, a TeleNICU program would allow remote intervention assistance to on-site providers to stabilize the patient while waiting for the transport team to arrive or assist in determining whether a transport could be prevented. Previously, staff at smaller facilities sometimes had to wait for the transport team to arrive in order to further stabilize the patient.

In the United States¹

10%

of all babies born are preterm

8.6%

of all babies born are
low birthweight

20%

of all infant deaths are
due to a birth defect

14.5%

of all pregnant mothers receive
inadequate or no prenatal care

The Solution

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon's TeleNICU program requirements had to meet the high standards set by both the remote and on-site clinical providers. SSM Health Cardinal Glennon previously partnered with Teladoc Health to develop their TeleMFM program, now considered the gold standard, which included:

- The ability to interface with an ultrasound/sonogram
- Purpose-built software and devices for high-acuity
- 24/7 network support

Due to this prior partnership, superior equipment, support, and strategy, Teladoc Health was able to easily and immediately support TeleNICU program requirements. Unlike most organizations, Teladoc Health and SSM Health Cardinal Glennon recognized the importance of bringing virtual care to high-acuity situations.

The Results

Adoption is often the toughest barrier to program success. Leveraging Teladoc Health's ease of use and continuous system monitoring, SSM Health Cardinal Glennon experienced a phenomenon where physicians previously hesitant to use telemedicine, became champions for the program because of the immediate real-time, live-saving, value added to the patient story.

With Teladoc Health as a partner, SSM Health Cardinal Glennon has been able to continuously evolve their TeleNICU program from both physician training and technological improvement perspectives. Together, over the last few years, they have grown their telemedicine programs into more outpatient, home-based and web-based models.



8–10%

of total births would benefit from an additional consultation with a neonatologist.

3–5%

of total births (from level I and II nurseries) would benefit from a full neonatology care plan and would most likely be transferred to a tertiary care facility.

¹March of Dimes

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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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