



Best Practices Guide

Launching A Virtual Health Program



Contents

The Virtual Health Advantage	3
Transcending the Status Quo of Care	4
6 Steps to Creating Your Virtual Health Program	6
1. Define Your Challenges	6
2. Set Reimbursement and Regulatory Expectations	7
3. Document Your Strategy	8
4. Evaluate Virtual Care Solutions	9
5. Implementation and Onboarding	10
6. Running a Successful Program	12
Getting Started with GlobalMed	14
A Complete Virtual Health Platform	15
How to Work With Us	16
About GlobalMed	17

The Virtual Health Advantage

Virtual Health has reinvented the healthcare experience. From small town clinics to naval ships to national hospital brands to school-based health centers, virtual care is bringing focused clinical expertise to patients who would otherwise go untreated. In an era when policy experts predict U.S. health expenditures will climb to [\\$6.2 trillion by 2028](#), healthcare leaders are turning to telehealth for its ability to generate radical cost savings.

Virtual care delivery benefits nearly every point and player on the continuum of care. Patients can visit doctors from their homes and workplaces, reducing travel; they can also experience shorter hospital stays and fewer readmissions, saving money for themselves, payers and healthcare networks. Physicians can handle increased patient volumes without driving from clinic to clinic or having to limit their patient base.

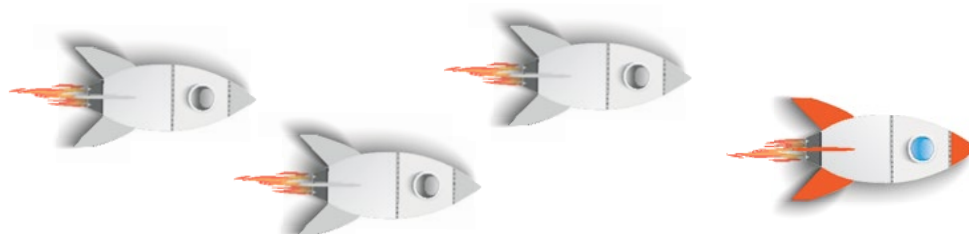
They can also expand access to rural areas experiencing a shortage of providers. Disabled and elderly patients can retain their independence and stay in their homes instead of going into an assisted living facility. [Healthcare consumers under age 40](#), who expect the same speed and convenience from healthcare that they find in digital banking and shopping apps, are seeking practices with telemedicine offerings. These are the healthcare consumers of the future and will not only desire virtual options from their providers, they will expect it.

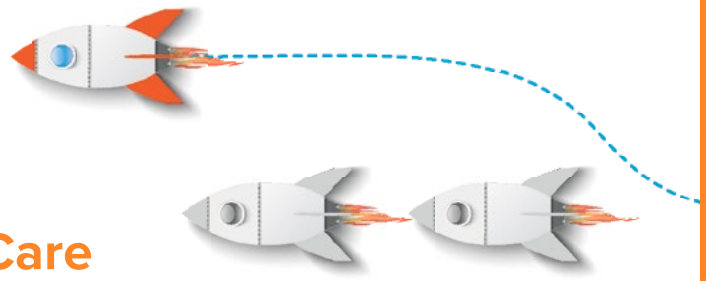


The COVID-19 pandemic unleashed a fresh wave of accelerated telehealth adoption, while expanding reimbursement. For many providers, it was a rapid learning curve: after hastily installing video-only platforms, they realized the clinical inadequacy and increased security risk of those tools. This has sparked a widespread migration to all-in-one telehealth platforms that can provide secure and evidence-based care.

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) recently endorsed this [move away from video-only solutions](#), noting, “While the federal government substantially waived enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic by allowing the use of non-HIPAA-compliant platforms, this flexibility is temporary, and providers could still face legal liability from patients or others for any privacy breaches. If your practice is currently using a non HIPAA-compliant platform, begin planning for compliance now by converting to a compliant telehealth platform.”

Today providers, from private practices to complex healthcare networks are implementing full-fledged telemedicine programs with the advanced tools that make sophisticated virtual care a reality.





Transcending the Status Quo of Care

“The horse is here to stay, but the automobile is only a novelty, a fad.”

President of Michigan Savings Bank, 1903

Clinicians who dismiss telehealth as a fad or a mere appendage to existing care delivery models are squandering economic and clinical gains. Virtual care has evolved beyond the Direct-To-Consumer video call – and pioneering clinicians are applying telehealth in groundbreaking ways:

Hospital support

Video conferencing [connects hospitals to virtual specialty providers they couldn't afford or find as full-time staff](#). From intensive care unit support to emergency department (ED) consultations, telemedicine can deliver 24-hour reinforcement and backup to understaffed hospitals and their clinicians.

Specialty consultations

[Primary care providers can consult with experts](#) who aren't locally available, such as a neurologist who can

address a patient's mobility disorder or a pediatric surgeon who can evaluate a young patient pre and post surgery.

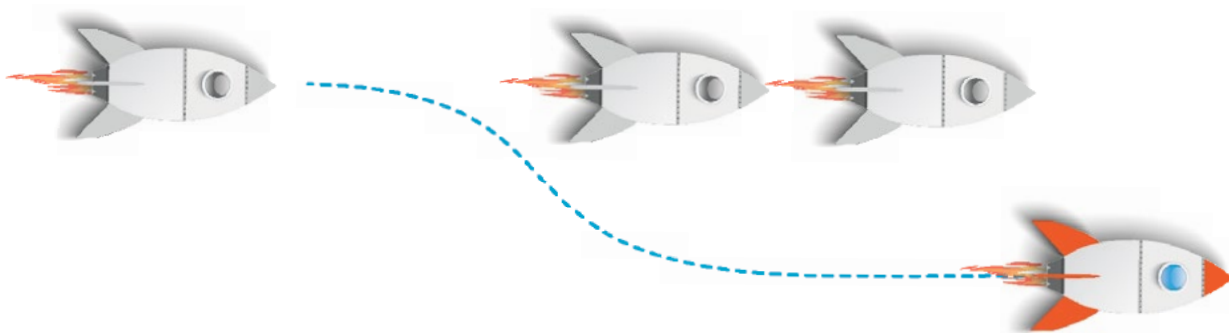
Provider and patient safety

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated telehealth's value in offering safe medical treatment while containing the spread of infectious disease. Now healthcare systems are turning to [virtual care to control the spread of other communicable diseases](#) – protecting both patients and professionals by providing medical services without contagion.

Rural/remote care

[Virtual health platforms bring care to the patient](#), rather than requiring patients to travel for care – which can transform healthcare outcomes in [rural communities](#), as well as [tribal lands](#), [offshore oil rigs](#) and even [space stations](#).





Population health

By providing virtual care to specific populations such as [prisoners](#), students and employees, healthcare organizations have been able to reduce costs, improve workplace and community safety, and [help disadvantaged children perform better in school](#).

Chronic disease management

One percent of the U.S. population [incurs 23 percent](#) of health care costs – and more than 90 percent of those patients have chronic conditions such as [diabetes](#), or hypertension. [Remote Patient Monitoring \(RPM\)](#) can help some patients avoid ED visits and hospitalizations or minimize hospital stays. [Treating patients in their home environment](#) can also help providers see their economic challenges, family dynamics and evaluate social determinants of health.

Smarter provider collaboration

Virtual platforms help providers exchange discharge summaries, treatment plans and medication histories [for a 360-degree view into the patient's story](#). This enhanced visibility can enable clinicians to avoid negative drug interactions, eliminate redundant care and accelerate interventions.

Capacity management

Hospitals and large healthcare networks can [balance provider availability with patient demand](#) through remote care – keeping their exam rooms and inpatient beds open for the patients who really need them. [Faster and accurate triage to urgent care, PCPs or the ED](#) can also reduce waiting times and limit contagion.

Chances are you're already doing telemedicine

That might be listening to a traveling patient describe their symptoms over the phone or setting up a crisis telehealth solution to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a good start with undeniable benefits. Yet, many providers aren't sure how to launch or expand a full telehealth program to include more use cases and solve more care delivery gaps. Virtual care is a fresh healthcare delivery paradigm, not a plug and play solution. By partnering a well-researched strategy with a solid foundation and savvy deployment, healthcare professionals can manifest its full transformative potential.

1

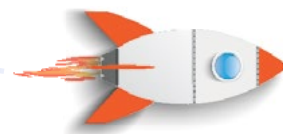
2

3

4

5

6



6 Steps to Creating Your Virtual Health Program

Telehealth enthusiasts sometimes make the mistake of leaping into a third-party Direct-to-Consumer app or buying a telehealth solution without defining their strategy. The typical result: a wasted investment and frustrated staff and patients. To build a virtual care program that drives both better patient outcomes and cost savings, begin with these six steps.



Define Your Challenges

1

Often teams will begin by focusing on technology, which leads to selecting a telehealth platform based mostly on technological integration factors. But utilization should be clinically driven and focused on the provider and patient experience. Work with your service line leaders to identify the pain points your organization is trying to solve. Are you trying to reach patients in remote areas? Improve patient quality outcomes? Increase patient volume without a brick and mortar expansion? Manage capacity more efficiently? Improve patient satisfaction scores?

Be specific about your clinical and cost challenges. Instead of simply deciding to compensate for a local shortage of specialists, define the disciplines where you need help – whether that's an acute stroke

intervention, neonatal unit support, or a mobile virtual platform that expands care out into patient homes in the community. Once you've outlined the most urgent needs, you can reverse engineer your program to solve those challenges.

At the same time, you'll want to consider your long-term objectives too. What are the organization's strategic goals and how might virtual health support them? Don't limit yourself to just immediate needs; be a visionary and outline a possible phased approach, even if it might change in the future.

This is also the ideal stage to talk to telemedicine experts, such the [American Telemedicine Association](#). Other providers who've implemented virtual care programs can share both the mistakes they made and the best practices they learned – and save you considerable time and effort.



Set Reimbursement and Regulatory Expectations

2

At first glance, there may seem to be a lot of ambiguity regarding telehealth regulations and reimbursement. The accelerated telehealth adoption of the COVID-19 pandemic also led to multiple reimbursement changes. For that reason, researching existing policies is vital.

[The American Medical Association's Telehealth Implementation Playbook](#) recommends developing a checklist for payer requirements to ensure you understand the correct documentation, CPT® codes and modifiers, provider type, place of service codes, and other criteria for reimbursement.

Make sure your team develops realistic expectations about reimbursement and revenue. A virtual health technology investment may not garner financial results in the short term – but organizations worldwide [are realizing a return on investment](#). That said, your program will deliver long-term value if it's architected wisely. **Here are a few things to know.**

- Start by defining your facility's geographic boundaries – and then researching the applicable federal and state regulations. Most states have parity laws, which require commercial payers to equally reimburse both in-person and remote visits.

- Payer reimbursement is more nuanced. Coverage policies, procedure codes, service sites and other components can influence how much your providers will be paid. Your staff will likely need to check reimbursement with payers on a case-by-case basis, just as they need to check eligibility and benefits for every patient.
- Don't be afraid to negotiate with payers. Explain the telehealth services that you're currently providing or planning to provide and ask for coverage.
- Many teams turn to grants to fund their programs – but those funds won't last forever. COVID has driven new grant opportunities offering telehealth-specific financial support. It can be a good place to start.
- Look beyond direct revenue for cost savings. A well-managed virtual program can [reduce no-show appointments](#), boost [downstream referrals and patient retention](#), increase patient load, and dramatically reduce provider travel.
- Remember to check any provider state licensing requirements and informed patient consent laws.

Learn More with These Reimbursement and Policy Resources

American Telemedicine Association

[ATA State Legislative Tracker](#)

[Breaking News & Industry Updates](#)

Center for Connected Health Policy

[State Telehealth Laws & Reimbursement Policies](#)

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

[CMS List of Telehealth Services Guide](#)

[CMS.gov Telemedicine General Information](#)

Telehealth Resource Centers

[Regional Telehealth Centers](#)

Telehealth.HHS.gov

[Billing for Telehealth](#)



Document Your Strategy

3

At this point, you should know if a telemedicine program makes fiscal and clinical sense for your organization. Your next step is to create a steering committee of key leaders and clinical champions to get official buy-in across the organization. Document a solid business justification with specific use cases for your program. You may be thinking of clinical needs but your stakeholders are likely thinking about the financials; include both in your justification.

Once you have a tentative green light, your committee of clinicians, administrators, IT leaders and other key stakeholders should analyze the clinical, technical, security and training requirements. That includes answering questions like:

- What are your existing communication networks and how will any network gaps be addressed?
- How will telehealth encounters be captured and stored?
- Does the solution need to interface with EHR/PACS – and will you connect to locations outside of your network?
- What type of contract will you need in place?
- Who will be responsible for credentialing your providers and which EHR will it be documented in?
- Who will be trained to use the technology?
- How will you protect PHI and meet compliance regulations?

Those answers will guide your development of a formal budget and timeline based on your clinical needs, your revenue expectations, and your strategy.

Finally, you'll also want to define your success metrics. Decide how you will measure outcomes, costs, volume, access, satisfaction or other benchmarks. Some of these, like community impact, may be difficult to measure financially. Others, like reducing length of hospital stays, reducing patient leakage or increasing provider retention will be more empirical. Measure all of it so you can prove your program's value when requesting budget for additional programs.



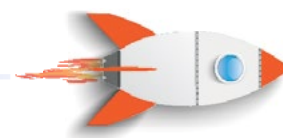
Evaluate Virtual Care Technology Solutions

4

Once you've done your budgeting work and secured stakeholder buy-in, it's time to assess virtual care solutions. **Here's a brief checklist:**

- ☑ **Does the solution support evidence-based care or just video calls?** A virtual health solution should integrate with data-driven devices like ultrasounds or ECG devices so your providers can deliver care that can be shown in a protocol-based plan.
- ☑ **Is it intuitive enough for patients and staff to use easily?** Virtual care needs to be fast, safe and easy to use so providers and patients can focus on the treatment rather than the technology.
- ☑ **Does the solution offer end-to-end virtual care capabilities?** You'll need both live videoconferencing and Store and Forward (asynchronous) capabilities so your providers can transmit electronic healthcare records such as images (MRI, CAT, PET and others) or laboratory results.
- ☑ **Will the solution easily integrate into your existing technology?** The solution should interface with any existing EHR and PAC systems so you can streamline clinical workflows, capture data and provide immediate critical care. [As the AAFP recently noted](#), EHR integration “allows for efficiencies in accessing patient demographics, launching a telehealth session from your appointments, and/or saving documents to the patient’s chart” – creating a more efficient and seamless experience for both patients and providers.
- ☑ **Is the solution provider agnostic?** An agnostic solution can be used with any provider, so you can work with doctors of your choosing, manage capacity and use your own care protocols. The American Medical Association’s [Telehealth Implementation Playbook](#) points out that third-party solutions can disrupt continuity of care, explaining, “In order to stay competitive and maintain that continuity of care, it’s increasingly important for physicians, practices, and health systems to consider implementing telehealth in their own environments.”

- ✓ **What is the security profile?** Look for a solution that offers a secure HIPAA and HITRUST compliant environment to protect PHI. Many crisis telehealth implementations launched during the pandemic contain security vulnerabilities. As you work to build a fully executed info sec program is your vendor practicing the same due care and commitment to security?
- ✓ **Is it scalable and versatile?** Too often organizations invest in solutions that only cater to one use case – and eventually they’re managing a burdensome tech stack of multiple solutions, driving up costs and slowing down their workflows. Look for one flexible and modular platform that can scale across any organizational size and streamline your technology footprint.
- ✓ **Is the vendor a good fit overall?** You should feel comfortable with the vendor’s culture and their training and support options, since they’ll be the ones to keep you up and running. They should also offer flexible payment options, whether you want to lease, buy or scale slowly.



Implementation and Onboarding

5

Once you’ve selected a solution, it’s time to roll out your new program. This is the intersection where telemedicine programs thrive or die – so tap staff with strong change management skills to ensure your program succeeds.



Identify telehealth evangelists in every vital area. Bring in a wide mix of expertise – consider informatics and IT experts who know medical records, a critical care nurse, clinicians in surgery and various specialists with a specific population focus such as pediatrics and women’s health. Add an executive administrator who understands reporting and marketing.

Identify the problem. Understanding pain points is critical. The most important question is: what problems are you try to solve? Listen to the patients and the providers, because they may have different ideas – and you need to hear all of them to develop the best global solution.

Establish a timeline for implementation, training and go-live. Your vendor should work with you to ensure your team is seeing patients virtually within a specified time frame. Make sure any emergency IT contacts are on hand in case of problems.

Help your staff build new patient workflows that involve checking payer telemedicine coverage. Checklists for payer requirements will help ensure your claims are processed correctly, while drafting patient consent forms and writing introductory guides can help your team save time educating patients down the road.

Design virtual care delivery processes that are as similar as possible to standard clinical workflows. While the technology will cause unavoidable changes, try to embed the technology and equipment use into the clinician's current daily routine. If using the solution is too radical a departure from that routine, the staff may be reluctant to use it,

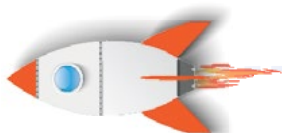
Train your staff to use the solution and do test runs in different clinical simulations to validate proper functioning. Test out different devices, features and connection methods to discover any process breakdowns.

Write up protocols for the use of the equipment and virtual examinations, including documentation for each medical specialty. Your vendor will likely have educational resources to share, such as FAQs and guides, so ask what they can provide.

Educate your patients about telemedicine during appointments and by sharing office signage, mailers and invoice flyers. Your first candidates for virtual services should be your more tech-savvy patients – but eventually you may want to approach others, such as a Medicaid patient with transportation issues or a disabled patient who has difficulty leaving the house.

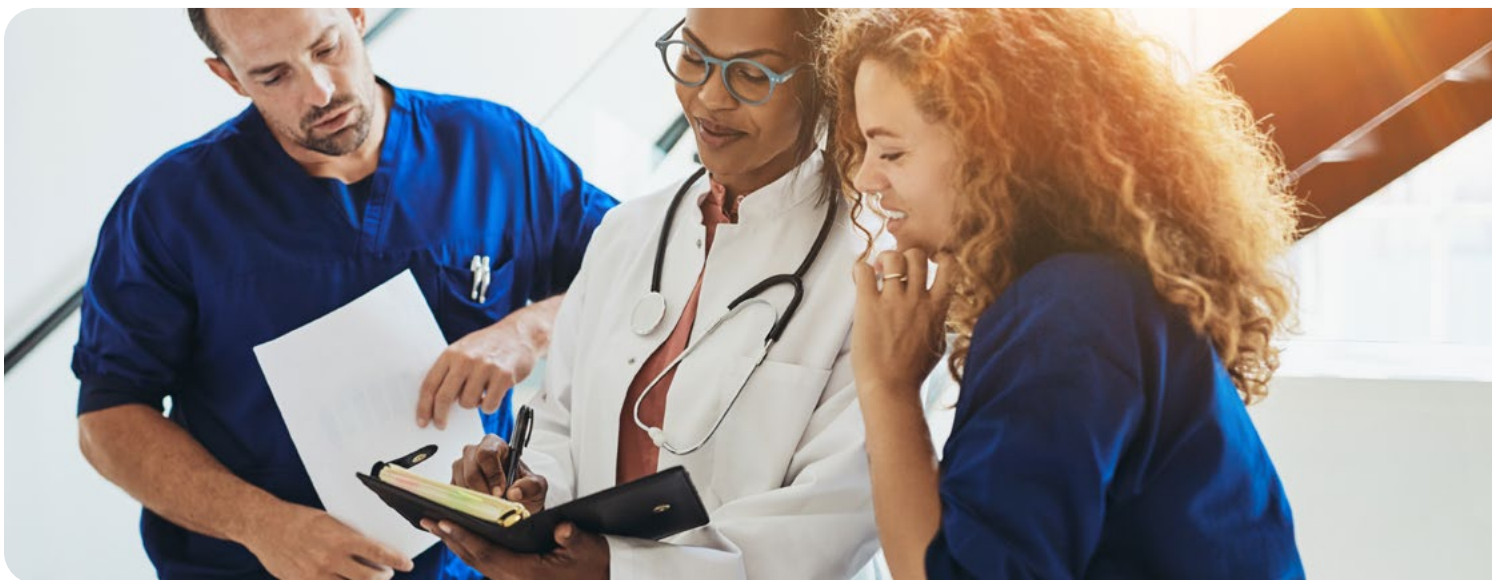
Cultivate a positive webside manner. That includes knowing how to make eye contact with the patient by looking at the camera rather than the screen, avoiding dead air and giving them extra time to ask questions. There are also best practices for clothing and exam room environments, such as using solid, neutral colors and avoiding patterns.

Adopt a start-up mentality – even if you're in a big organization. “Fail faster” should be your motto as you continually experiment, test your results, then tweak your workflows and strategies accordingly.



More than three-quarters of physicians surveyed said telemedicine helped them provide better care for patients.

- Telehealth Impact Study: Physician Survey, COVID-19 Healthcare Coalition, Nov. 16, 2020.



6

Running a Successful Program

Once you've deployed your virtual health program, it's tempting to consider your journey complete. In fact, the rewards are just beginning.

Start small. Stay focused on quick wins and gains. Look at the tidal pool, not the ocean, so you can understand the impact you made and learn those lessons. Teams that start with big programs won't be able to see that.

Be patient. You're asking people to change the way they give or receive care. Attitudes toward telehealth can vary wildly according to region, age, tech savviness, educational background and culture. Be prepared for adoption to happen incrementally.

Expect surprises. Don't buy into stereotypes. Don't assume a younger RPM population will appreciate text messaging or that patients over 75 won't use connective devices.

Continue to Collaborate. While the clinical perspective should drive your approach, partnering with IT is critical. Bring all stakeholders

together with monthly lunch and learns, build new relationships and harness existing ones. The goal is to make sure everyone shares the same vision and enthusiasm while contributing their unique perspectives.

Collect feedback. Track adoption behaviors from your patient population and adapt accordingly.

Use surveys with both patients and providers and use the response to guide efforts and for valuable testimonials.

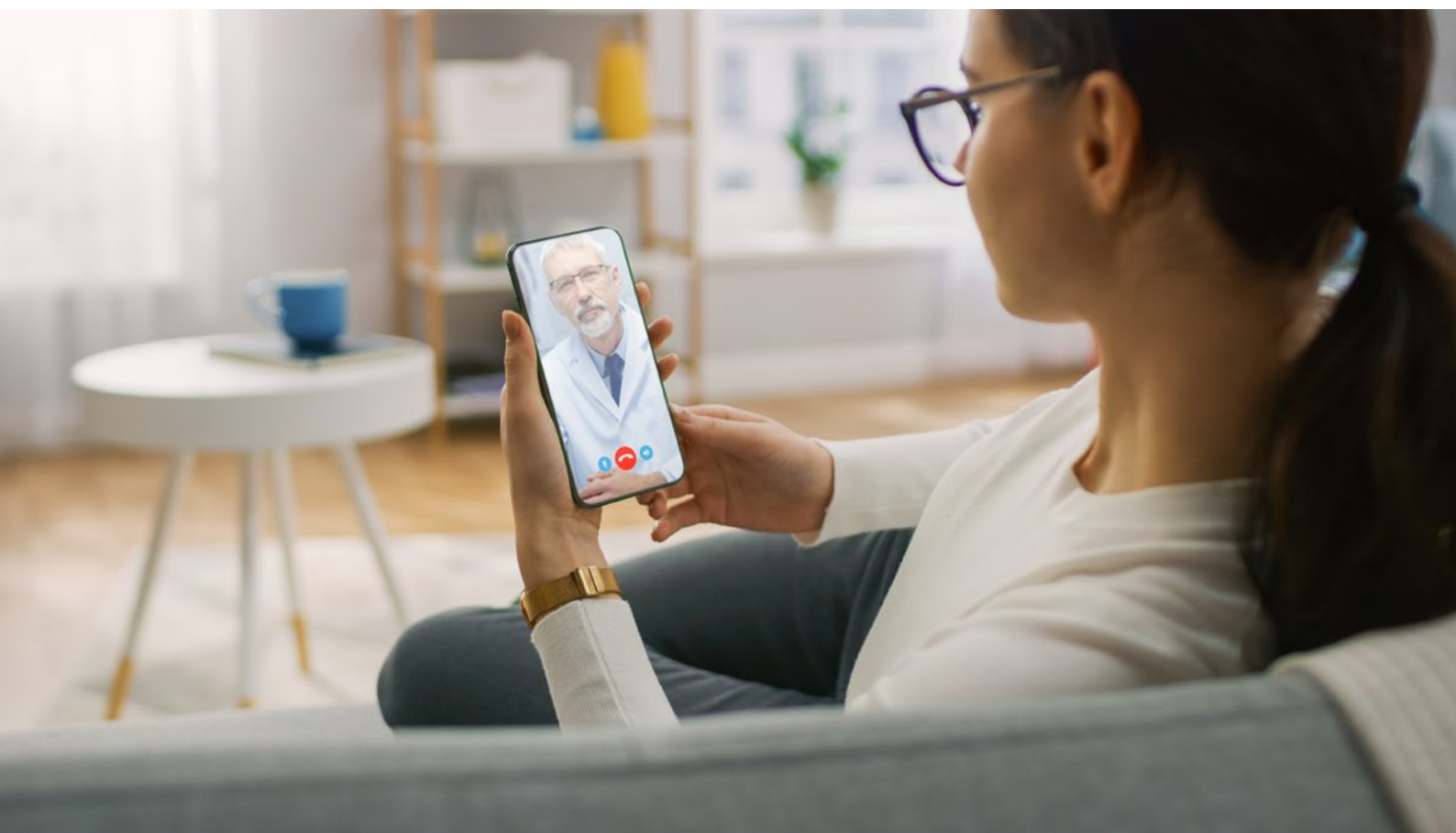
Report your results to stakeholders. Find creative ways to articulate the benefits. Hard data, like improvements in emergency room wait times through smarter triage, is always valuable. But so are individual stories of providers with better work-life balance or rural patients able to receive life-saving screenings.

Revisit your metrics. Virtual health ROI is a moving target – so expect that some of your original metrics may turn out to not be worth much. Some of your best results may not be revenue generation but cost avoidance or reduction.

Re-evaluate your workflows and protocols as time goes on. As other clinical programs change or new technologies join your program, you may need to redesign and redocument to adapt efficiently.

Re-assess your goals. A healthy telehealth program will evolve over time. Look at the lessons learned, patient and provider feedback, and clinical improvements – and look for new clinical horizons to virtualize.

Stay current on telehealth innovation. Vendor blogs, industry sites like Center for Connected Health Policy and American Telemedicine Association meetings are dedicated to chronicling advances in virtual care. New solutions and opportunities appear regularly – so stay connected to the industry and see how you can apply those innovations to your clinical practice.



Getting Started with GlobalMed

GlobalMed solutions have helped [providers deliver responsible virtual care in more than 60 nations and a variety of settings](#) – including Air Force One, the Havasupai tribe at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, survivors of Hurricane Maria, villages in Zimbabwe and Olympic athletes.

Our software platform, medical devices and telehealth stations are designed to help telemedicine beginners launch successful virtual programs from the ground up. **Here are a few reasons we're the global telemedicine vendor of choice:**

- **Our virtual health technology supports all you need from one platform.** While other telehealth companies rely on simple text and video calls or offer disjointed and disparate tools, our products are [built to work together across the care spectrum](#) from a patient video encounter for low acuity conditions to specialty use cases and high acuity, complex care.
- **Scalable and modular, [GlobalMed solutions](#)** can fit into your existing program or help you build a virtual health program from scratch. Our three categories of products – Software, Digital Telehealth Devices, and Virtual Care Delivery Stations - can be mixed and matched to meet your specific needs.
- **GlobalMed is provider agnostic and can be white-labeled.** Any type of clinician can use our solution and patients can see the provider they already know and trust while hospitals and urgent care centers can use their own staff, protect their brand and drive stronger revenue.
- **We offer world-class virtual health security.** GlobalMed is the only telehealth company with an Authority to Operate (ATO) on the Defense Health Agency and Department of Defense networks. Not only is our software HIPAA compliant and hosted in a HITRUST-certified Microsoft Azure environment, but we also meet a range of quality and manufacturing certifications including ISO 13485 and successfully completed the SOC 2 Type 2 examination for our virtual health platform to ensure you're protected.
- **Our intuitive solutions remove a need to be tech-savvy.** Providers and patients can focus on the treatment rather than the technology. Built-in uptime and high-speed performance mean providers can safely transmit and receive clinical data in real-time.



A Complete Virtual Health Platform

eNcounter®

✓ Diagnostics + ✓ Workflows + ✓ Flexible APIs

Available with platform or stand-alone

Available stand-alone only

eNcounter® View

[Clinician-to-Clinician Video](#)

eNcounter® Cloud

[Medical Imaging Archiving and Data Management](#)

ClearSteth®

[Digital stethoscope software for advanced teleauscultation.](#) Works with the RNK and ThinkLabs One digital stethoscopes.



eNcounter® NOW

[Direct-to-Patient Video](#)

Simple and secure mobile video telehealth solution for smart phones and tablets.



VIRTUAL CARE DELIVERY STATIONS

[Telehealth exam stations](#) include a wide range of capabilities whether you need a mobile all-in-one, a smaller transportable or wall-mounted solution or even an audiology-specific, we've got you covered.



DIGITAL TELEHEALTH DEVICES



[Digital devices](#) include exam cameras, stethoscopes, otoscopes, ultrasound probe, ECG and spirometry equipment, vitals monitoring and conference cameras.



How to Work With Us

GlobalMed understands how to unlock the innovative and invigorating power of telemedicine in your healthcare organization.

Initial Consultation – Get in touch via any of the contact information below. A telehealth expert will set up an initial consultation to better understand your needs and how we may help you.

Demo & Pricing – If our solutions sound like a fit for your needs, we will coordinate a demonstration of the technology, further discussion and Q&A. Your dedicated rep will fine-tune the recommended solution for your needs and develop a price quote.

Solution Review – Our experts recognize the unique nuances of architecting the right solution and helping you navigate your HCOs review and decision-making process. We learn your challenges, your goals, your processes and procedures and design a virtual health program around your needs.

Implementation. Our team will also walk you through your technical setup, workflow customization, billing best practices, webside manner and more – providing you with every element required to succeed.

Training and Support. A dedicated customer success advocate will schedule training and troubleshoot any challenges. We'll also run through practice sessions with you to help you build confidence and tweak your workflow so your team delivers world-class virtual care to your patients from day one.

After you're up and running, we'll check in on the schedule of your choosing to make sure your goals are met and explore ways to improve.

CONTACT US



480-922-0044



telemed@globalmed.com



www.globalmed.com



GlobalMed powers the world's largest, most advanced virtual health programs by designing and manufacturing integrated software and hardware virtual care delivery solutions that support a patient at any point in the continuum of care. Providers are enabled with data capturing tools to deliver evidence-based treatment and improve patient outcomes while lowering costs. Providers looking for their own technology to manage capacity, save money, and deliver responsible medicine, will get all they need from one platform. Recognizing the importance of trust and consistency in healthcare, GlobalMed also offers white-label versions of their systems so that providers can self-brand their virtual care offerings to strengthen the patient relationship with their organization.

With over 40 million consults delivered in 60 countries and specializing in both federal and commercial spaces, GlobalMed's virtual health platform has the Authority to Operate (ATO) on the Department of Defense networks and is used worldwide from the Department of Veteran Affairs and White House Medical Unit to rural hospitals and villages in Africa. Founded in 2002 by a Marine Corps Reserve Veteran still serving as CEO.

Learn more at www.globalmed.com.

