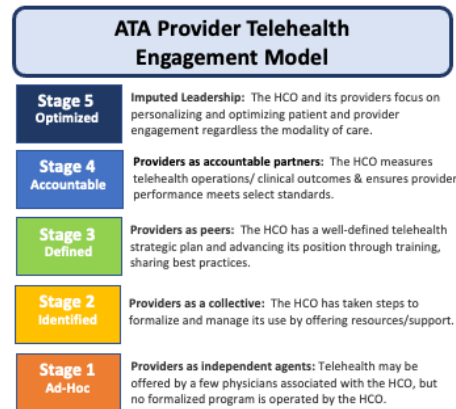


Introduction to the ATA’s Provider Telehealth Engagement Model

With the help of our valued members, the ATA guides the evolution of the telehealth market. The latest expression of our commitment to high-quality accessible care is our [Provider Telehealth Engagement Model \(PTEM\)](#). Employing rigorous telehealth research, vetted analytics, and strategic frameworks, PTEM helps **patient care delivery organizations** to better understand why, when, and how to mature their telehealth program.

Provider engagement plays a critical role in the success of any healthcare organization’s (HCO) telehealth offering. Employing a 5-Stage Maturity Model in a confidential environment, the ATA delivers customized, vetted assessments of self-reported organizational inputs – culture, clinical, and corporate – from HCOs utilizing telehealth services in some manner to deliver patient care.

With a customized report, HCOs can learn how they compare to peers across the country, and how to undertake strategic efforts to increase positive provider engagement in their telehealth program. [Follow this link](#) to apply for your opportunity to complete the PTEM assessment and receive a customized, confidential report.



Case Study: Charleston Area Medical Center

The CAMC we know today was born in 1972 to provide the best care to southern West Virginia patients, and provide quality education for medical and other healthcare students. CAMC is a nonprofit, 956-bed, regional referral center with nearly 8,000 employees and more than 700 physicians with admitting privileges. And, CAMC is a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient, the first and only organization in West Virginia to ever receive the honor.

This is CAMC’s story.

WEST VIRGINIANS FACE THREE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES TO RECEIVING HIGH QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE CARE

With more mountainous land per square mile than any other state, West Virginia has >1,000 named mountains, and is nearly entirely mountainous.¹ In this terrain, finding transportation to hospitals and specialists can be

¹ [Peak Advisor](#).

extremely time-consuming and complex. In addition, the state is one of the fifth poorest in the Union with a poverty rate of 14.6%²; patients have to make difficult decisions of whether or not to get the care they need.

Into this complicated situation we now add the issue of high-speed internet. While the FCC reports that Americans overall are benefitting from significant progress in the deployment of advanced telecommunications capability³, five states are being left behind and West Virginia is one of them, ranking 48th in the nation⁴.

Just 82% of West Virginians have a high-speed internet connection in their home. And, West Virginia's Broadband Enhancement Council reports that percentage drops to 73% for the 1.1 million (64% of the state's population) living in rural communities of <2,500 people.⁵ Worse, the WVBECC revealed that the speeds of internet actually being delivered to residents across the state (versus speeds reported by the state's internet provider) was less than half the 25 megabits per second required by the FCC to qualify as high-speed.⁶

TELEHEALTH IS ESSENTIAL TO CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTER'S STRATEGY

For Charleston Area Medical Center leadership, telehealth has become an essential element of CAMC's ability to provide high-quality care access to West Virginians. And, with the challenges noted above, CAMC's telehealth team – led by Becky Harless – had to get creative.

First, the CAMC team experimented with providing telehealth directly to patients via their cell and smart phones. However, they rapidly ran into challenges due to broadband gaps and supposedly "high speed" connections that weren't speedy enough to support a telehealth encounter. Instead of enhancing patient-provider encounters, this approach was frustrating and upsetting to all.

Then, Becky learned that West Virginia – one of 35 certificate of need (CON) states – does not require a CON for a telehealth location. So, she experimented with a stand-alone CAMC telehealth clinic in a strip mall in a small community. The idea was to hard-wire the space so patients could come into the clinic and virtually meet with their clinician. This second experiment was also immensely valuable as the team learned that a stand-alone telehealth clinic didn't have enough of a healthcare environment around it to attract enough patients.

The third time was the charm. CAMC rented space within a Rural Health Center (RHC) in Lewisburg, hard-wired the space for high-speed internet, and hired a full-time nurse navigator to work within the RHC as a fully-integrated member of the clinical team. The staff love the easy access their patients now have to CAMC's specialists. Lewisburg is a two-hour drive from Charleston and includes two \$8.50 tolls each way. Having access to CAMC specialists via telehealth is a significant advantage for patients and the Lewisburg RHC clinical team. Plus, CAMC has experienced a documented increase in new patients to its health system, downstream revenue, and more-satisfied clinicians and patients.

² [World Population Review](#). 2022.

³ Federal Communication Commission. [Fourteenth Broadband Deployment Report](#). Released January 19, 2021.

⁴ Manfield, Lucas. [West Virginia leaders say improving internet is a top priority. The latest numbers show access in the state is just getting worse](#). February 16, 2021. Mountain State Spotlight.

⁵ [West Virginia State Broadband Plan 2020-25](#). Published 2019.

⁶ Ibid.

POSITIVE PATIENT / CLINICIAN EXPERIENCE + RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Becky emphasizes two key components of a successful telehealth hub: (1) partnering with a RHC or FQHC whose clinical team will encourage its patients to engage in telehealth, and (2) hiring a nurse who likes being a navigator - tracking down information and easing patients' journeys through a health system. CAMC's nurse navigator improves care quality by tracking down test results so repeat tests are avoided. And, she helps patients reduce their transportation complexities by having as many new tests done locally as reasonably possible.

Clinician and patient experiences with the telehealth hub have been overwhelmingly positive. Here are three examples:

- When a patient in need of a neurology consultation could not find transportation to Charleston, the nurse navigator stepped in. During the telehealth appointment, she assisted the patient in walking down the hall and back as the neurologist provided verbal direction and observed the patient. Both the physician and patient were highly satisfied with the interaction and the patient received the care required.
- When an ambulance cancelled - which meant a pulmonary patient could not make the journey to Charleston - the nurse navigator helped turn the appointment into a successful telehealth encounter.
- Thanks to the nurse navigator being at the telehealth hub with patients, CAMC is now able to provide virtual hip replacement evaluations with orthopedic surgeons.

Financially, during a chart review of one four-month period, Becky found that new patients had been added to the CAMC system, and downstream revenue had been generated. For example, she documented numerous cardiac catheterizations, stress tests, ECHOs, and CT angiographies. When the financials were analyzed, the team found that the telehealth hub was profitable in Year 2.

The ROI – financial, market share, and patient/clinician satisfaction – has been so significant that CAMC will have opened four telehealth hubs by YE2022. Plus, three more are planned for 2023 and CAMC has invested in a mobile unit as a telehealth hub. The unit is being built and is scheduled for delivery in Fall 2022. This mobile telehealth unit will be able to visit rural health centers across West Virginia on a monthly basis – bringing high-quality, accessible care to more residents.

CAMC's success with its telehealth hub initiative has not gone unnoticed. Recently, CEO David Ramsey did a site visit of the telehealth hub with West Virginia's Secretary of Health and Human Services. And, leaders of other Rural Health Centers are interested in talking with CAMC to set up a telehealth hub in their clinics. As a result of their documented success, CAMC now considers telehealth an essential component of its organizational strategy.