Teladoc HEALTH | **ValleyHealth** *Healthier, together.*

A virtual nursing program solving today's workforce challenges—with scale for future sustainability

Valley Health

Not-for-profit regional healthcare system

Background

- Service area: Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland
- 6 hospitals
- +6,000 employees, including +850 physicians
- 29,000 hospital admissions
- 644 patient beds

Virtual Care Offering

- Inpatient Connected Care

Transforming care delivery with virtual care

Valley Health is a not-for-profit regional healthcare system serving a population of over a million across Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland. With 644 inpatient beds across 6 hospitals, Valley Health averages 29,000 hospital admissions per year.[1]

Committed to providing high-quality, affordable care, Valley Health established a Digital Health and Integration Center Collaborative to evaluate their virtual care ecosystem, identify areas for improvement and develop a strategic blueprint for the future. Recognizing that their existing system relied on multiple different digital platforms to address different needs, Valley Health sought a way to consolidate their telehealth solutions into one platform to simplify the experience for both patients and providers. Their goal was to design a flexible, long term, evidence-based strategy that could adapt to support multiple teams, increase health equity and improve the patient experience.

Simultaneously, like many healthcare organizations, Valley Health found themselves facing workforce shortages and recruiting challenges amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic that compelled them to seek innovative solutions to close coverage gaps and ensure equitable care access across their large catchment area.

RESULTS

71%

of bedside nurses **indicated interest in learning** how to work as a virtual nurse[1]

29%

of bedside nurses **utilized a virtual nurse** for assistance, cross checking or mentorship[1]

3.5+

average **total hours saved** for bedside nurses per shift[1]

With the nursing shortage projected to continue for the next decade, Valley Health wanted to develop a proactive, scalable strategy that would fit their needs for years to come. Having partnered with Teladoc Health® since 2018, Valley Health knew exactly where to turn when they were looking for a sophisticated virtual solution that would enable them to mitigate staffing challenges and reduce strain on their nursing staff.

Developing a state-of-the-art virtual nursing pilot program

Valley Health partnered with Teladoc Health to implement a virtual nursing pilot program, Bedside Connect, at Warren Memorial Hospital in Front Royal, VA in May 2023. Prior to the program launch, Valley Health collaborated with their nursing supervisors, managers and direct care nurses to develop a comprehensive workflow plan.

During the pilot implementation, Valley Health worked to educate additional stakeholders — such as housekeepers, nutritionists and physical therapists — who might encounter the virtual nursing system in the course of their daily work. To educate patients and families, they provided a one-page handout with instructions on how to interact with Bedside Connect. This proactive approach to change management and education allowed Valley Health to address patient and provider fears and transition seamlessly from a traditional care model to a hybrid care model.

Patient rooms at Warren Memorial Hospital outfitted their patient room televisions with state-of-the-art cameras and audio equipment to enable collaboration between bedside nurses and virtual nurses. When a patient is admitted, the charge nurse sends a notification to the virtual nurse via their EHR system. The virtual nurse reviews the new patient's information then greets the patient via the television system at the same time as the bedside nurse. The virtual nurse handles the majority of the patient paperwork, enabling the bedside nurse to focus on in-person duties. Based on their preliminary findings, Valley Health estimates that virtual nurses have helped free up a significant amount of time for bedside nurses, saving an average of more than 3.5 hours per shift.[1]

In addition to assisting with patient admissions, discharges and multidisciplinary rounding, the virtual nurses at Warren Memorial Hospital monitor patients using sophisticated predictive analytics that help them identify patients with a higher potential for deterioration. If a patient begins to deteriorate, the virtual nurse uses the television system to virtually knock, enter the patient's room, and assess the situation. The virtual nurse can then initiate rapid response with the bedside nurse, if needed. With one virtual nurse on duty 24/7, Warren Memorial Hospital is able to provide an enhanced level of patient care, ensuring that patients are triaged efficiently and effectively, bedside nurses are able to focus on in-person duties and high-priority patients receive the prompt care they require.

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> **Teladoc Health's Inpatient Connected care solution has been invaluable in helping us address the nursing shortage, improve care coverage, increase job satisfaction among our nurses and enhance patient satisfaction."**
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> — **Theresa Trivette,** DNP, RN, CENP, Chief Nursing Executive, Valley Health

Benefits of the program include:

improved accessibility

enhanced care coordination

enhanced patient engagement

improved medication adherence

more efficient triage due to predictive analytics

Broadening the scope of virtual care within the health system

In just a few months, Valley Health's virtual nursing pilot program has proven to be a success. According to an internal survey, 71% of their nurses indicated interest in working as a virtual nurse, while 29% reported utilizing a virtual nurse for assistance, cross checking or mentorship.[1]

Not only is Valley Health committed to expanding their virtual nursing program to their other hospitals, they are equally committed to providing their employees with the mental health support they need. They recently incorporated Teladoc Health's digital mental health solution into their Care for the Caregiver program, which provides mental health support to nurses facing stressful situations. Teladoc Health's digital solution will help to enhance patient care and expand access to the Care for the Caregiver program, which currently employs a staff of 70 trained mental health professionals. Like the virtual nursing program, this hybrid combination of in-person and virtual support will help to ensure that Valley Health's nurses have convenient access to high-quality mental health care where and when they need it most.

Looking to the future, Valley Health plans to scale their virtual care ecosystem to include enhanced care coordination, remote patient monitoring, pharmacy, physical therapy and more. **With their dedicated approach to strategic innovation and their trusted partnership with Teladoc Health, Valley Health continues to deliver on their promise to make their communities healthier, together.**

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> **Starting with a dedicated, flexible approach is essential. We incorporated feedback from every level of our nursing staff to help ensure that we designed a workflow that fit the needs of both our patients and nurses. Teladoc Health's Inpatient Connected Care solution provided the flexibility we needed to achieve success."**
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> – **Delores Gehr,** MPA, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, CEN, Chief Nursing Officer, Warren Memorial Hospital

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