

JSA Changes the Face of Telepsychiatry with LifeSize HD Video Communications

Telemedicine pioneers JSA Health Telepsychiatry choose LifeSize HD video to expand business, allow doctors and patients to connect seamlessly for meaningful communication

Organization

JSA Health Telepsychiatry, Houston, Texas, USA

Imagine a 17-year-old girl having suicidal thoughts. A concerned relative takes her to the emergency room at the local hospital. Though professional care is certainly needed, emergency personnel are uncomfortable with how to care for her without access to a specialist. Unfortunately, like many facilities today, urban or rural, the hospital does not have a psychiatrist on the medical staff who can respond in-person to the emergency room. Without access to a specialist to assess the risk of suicide, the doctor is not comfortable releasing her. She sits in the E.R. for 36 hours, vulnerable and scared, before transfer to a mental health facility can be arranged.

In many cities across the nation, a shortage of mental health care professionals, especially in rural communities, has caused a significant number of patients to go without treatment or in extreme cases, wait days or weeks for psychiatric help.

JSA created a telemedicine model which provides fast, flexible, around-the-clock access to emergent, urgent and routine psychiatric evaluation for individuals in need. Founded in 2007 by internationally-recognized psychiatrists, JSA provides scheduled and emergency psychiatric care, with access to a team of child, adolescent, adult, and substance-abuse specialists.

According to the Hogg Foundation of Mental Health, Texas suffers from a severe shortage of professionals. In fact, 171 of the 254 counties in the state have no psychiatrist.

Because of these numbers, JSA has stepped in to provide psychiatric evaluations in emergency rooms, rural mental health centers, schools and jails to fill the void.



CHALLENGE

In recent years, the US has seen a shortage of mental health workers. JSA needed a technology enabler to make telepsychiatry a reality.



SOLUTION

The easily deployable, simple to use, LifeSize® Express™ and LifeSize® Passport™ HD video systems became the communications product of choice for doctors and administrators at JSA.



RESULTS

LifeSize helped JSA significantly grow their business. The practice has had 45,000 patient encounters since it was founded in 2007.



Challenge

Well-versed in the discipline of emergency psychiatry, published author, JSA president and chief executive officer Avrim Fishkind has leveraged available technologies in order to overcome the continued shortage of mental health practitioners across Texas and Louisiana.

“High-definition capability allows psychiatrists to meet the need for care in emergency settings, an area of particular shortage,” said Fishkind, who is also the past-president of the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry and a member of the General Assembly of the American Psychiatric Association.

“Telepsychiatry is becoming the fastest expanding segment within the field,” said Fishkind. “Psychiatrists cannot possibly provide in-person coverage to the 4,700 medical emergency rooms, medical floors units and intensive care units in the United States, nor reach patients and clinics in rural areas.”

Telepsychiatry, or the pairing of practitioner and patient over interactive video conference, is not a new concept. In fact, the first attempts at telemedicine in the 1950’s and early 1960’s were carried out using telepsychiatry.

A key concept in all successful telepsychiatry programs is identifying a technology enabler.

JSA’s Key Needs:

Superior Quality: HD quality video that removes any concerns about the doctor/patient relationship by providing a lifelike experience

Flexibility: Scalable bandwidth that maintains quality, especially in more rural areas

Price Performance: Lowest total cost of ownership per site

Ease of Use: Both distance and patient-site providers must find the technology simple to use and deploy



“Telepsychiatry is becoming the fastest expanding segment within the field.”

– AVRIM FISHKIND, MD, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, JSA HEALTH TELEPSYCHIATRY



Solution

With the help of trusted technology partner Unified Communications, a leading provider of conferencing solutions, products and services, JSA decided that the HD video offerings from LifeSize were the best solution to meet their needs. The compact size of the LifeSize Express and LifeSize Passport products and its point-to-point connectivity made it easy to deploy in all types of environments. Like all LifeSize products, the resolution scales with the bandwidth, so more rural locations would not require upgraded networks in order to see a high-quality image. JSA uses LifeSize’s multi-point call capacity for training, peer-review, and case consultations.

“There is no other vendor in the industry that can compete with LifeSize on quality, price and customer support,” said Fishkind.

Because most of JSA’s clients are mental health centers, schools, hospitals and jails, making good use of taxpayer dollars is important. Whether it be a more integrated room with special A/V equipment added on or a simple HD monitor and video system placed on a mobile cart, LifeSize is flexible enough to deploy virtually anywhere.





Results

Since implementing LifeSize HD video, JSA has seen tremendous growth in its business. After seeing its first patient in early 2008, JSA has had over 45,000 patient encounters.

"We are now serving over 25 clients in over 80 locations and counting," said Fishkind. "The openness and interoperability of LifeSize products makes it easier for us to connect with more people in more places."

JSA psychiatrists enjoy the flexibility of being able to practice in multiple locations without travel. Because all that is needed is a high-speed internet connection, a growing number of JSA's doctors have HIPAA-compliant video systems in their home offices. In addition, patients can access specialty doctors within their home communities, eliminating the need to travel to urban medical centers.

"In one day, I saw patients in four different Texas clinics that would have required me to drive over 600 miles in my car in a single day," said Fishkind.



After implementing LifeSize, JSA has experienced significant growth.



LifeSize[®]
A division of Logitech

LifeSize Communications:
1601 S. Mopac Expressway
Suite 100
Austin, Texas 78746 USA

Phone: +1 512 347 9300
Fax: +1 512 347 9301
Email: info@lifesize.com
www.lifesize.com

EMEA:
LifeSize Europe
LifeSize Communications, Ltd.
Phone: 00 8000 999 09 799

APAC:
LifeSize Asia Pacific
Phone: +65 6303 8370