

LifeSize® Results

Telepsychiatry Practice Utilizes LifeSize Video Solutions to Offer Exemplary Mental Health Care Treatment to Patients Statewide

With LifeSize ClearSea, patients can receive specialized mental health care within their own community from providers across the state of Nebraska

Organization

Premier Psychiatric Group, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA

Founded in 1998 by Dr. Walter Duffy, Premier Psychiatric Group (Premier Psych) provides outpatient psychiatric services to individuals of all ages across the state of Nebraska, into South Dakota and Iowa, and continues to expand its reach. With a keen focus on medication management, the healthcare organization also provides services such as psychological evaluations, transcranial magnetic stimulation

and pharmacogenetic (DNA) testing, among others.

Currently, the practice has seven clinics spread across the state with its main office in Lincoln. Additionally, Premier Psych partners with a number of providers at hospitals, and offers medical services at nursing homes and community mental health centers.



Premier Psych uses modern technology to provide better care to its patients.

Challenge

 Because Premier Psych is located throughout the rural state of Nebraska, decision makers at the healthcare organization realized the need to implement their own telehealth solution, rather than relying on the statewide network which often yielded unfavorable performance.

Solution

 Premier Psych turned to LifeSize ClearSea, an enterprise-class client/server solution for desktop video conferencing. Through this technology, Premier Psych patients and providers can connect over any standards-based video conferencing endpoint in high definition.

Results

 Patients, as well as physicians, enjoy the accessibility and convenience that telehealth provides. In the future, Premier Psych is looking to extend video support to mobile devices, so physicians can help even more patients from wherever they may be.

Challenge



Accessibility to mental health care is a challenge that the United States has faced for a number of years, especially in rural regions such as Nebraska.

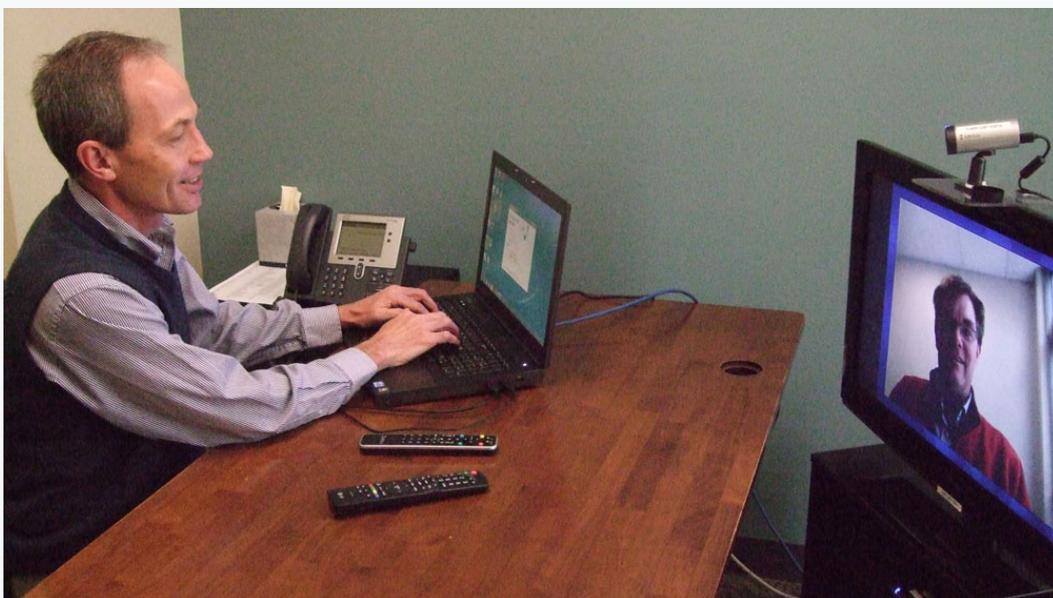
When Dr. Duffy first founded Premier Psych, patients were driving more than three hours to visit the main office in the state's capital. This model was decidedly unsustainable and Dr. Duffy knew that in order to treat more patients across the state, Premier Psych needed to consider alternative methods of treatment.

Nearly a decade ago, Nebraska instituted a statewide telehealth network that encouraged caregivers to use video collaboration technology to provide medical services to patients who were unable to travel or lived in a particularly rural area. Recognizing the potential in this program, Dr. Duffy and his team began using the state's telehealth network in 2006 to connect with patients and engage in "telepsychiatry." However, Premier Psych quickly outgrew the statewide network and found that "relying on a middle man" was frustrating and inefficient.

"By the second quarter of 2012, our telehealth needs were skyrocketing, and the statewide telehealth network could not support our volume of requests," explained Dr. Duffy. "Even when they could, there were often network issues or technical problems that made the process slow and tedious. We knew then that, in order for our organization to provide the highest quality care to our patients and partner with others, we would need to invest in our own video conferencing technology, as well as our own IT staff and infrastructure."

With LifeSize's help, we can offer the absolute best in mental health care to more patients than ever before.

- Dr. Walter Duffy, CEO/Founder/Owner, Premier Psych



Solution



Once Dr. Duffy and his team decided that the clinic needed to purchase video technology of its own, they set out to evaluate offerings from all of the major vendors, including Cisco, Vidyo, LifeSize and others. To avoid the technical issues associated with the statewide telehealth network, Premier Psych decision makers were looking for a solution that was scalable and could continuously meet the needs of the healthcare organization, no matter how large it would eventually grow. Additionally, it was imperative that the systems were interoperable with other third-party endpoints, since hospitals and clinics across Nebraska all use various manufacturers' technology. In order for the patient-doctor interaction to be as lifelike as possible, the evaluation team wanted a system that provided high definition picture quality, to ensure that every facial cue and nuance could be viewed clearly (as this is an important function of the field of psychiatry). In addition, Dr. Duffy wanted to partner with a forward thinking company that was developing more mobile applications.

"I have been in the telehealth industry for more than six years and I've watched the image quality of video solutions improve over time, from standard definition to high definition" said Steve Van Hoosen, telehealth and media services coordinator at PPG. "People have come to expect HD on their large, flat-screen televisions at home, so video collaboration technology must provide the same crystal-clear experience. We found that we could only really consistently achieve that type of quality through LifeSize."

"After looking at all of the different vendors, LifeSize shined for a number of reasons. It was simple enough that every patient, nurse and doctor could utilize the systems with

ease, and it was interoperable with nearly any other video system, even those that were behind tricky firewalls," said Dr. Duffy. "But it wasn't just the technology that I felt I could trust; the people at LifeSize were responsive and helpful through the entire process. They are always available to lend a helping hand."

Once the evaluation process was complete, Premier Psych invested in LifeSize ClearSea, a client/server solution for desktop and mobile video conferencing. Through LifeSize ClearSea, Premier Psych is able to provide a log-in to providers to "dial in" to video calls on any standards-based system. Additionally, Premier Psych has also recommended LifeSize Unity Series products to providers who are looking for an all-in-one, integrated video solution to easily deploy in their office.



Results



Through a network of primary care physicians and specialists, Premier Psych is now able to provide mental healthcare services to more patients across the state of Nebraska, and even to other states such as South Dakota and Iowa.

Initially, providers and patients were hesitant to use the new technology, but realized its value once they recognized that using LifeSize video technology was virtually identical to an in-person interaction. Additionally, both parties appreciate the convenience and accessibility that the solution provides, which eliminates the need for time-consuming travel to and from appointments.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to have easy access to Premier Psych's services with the use of telehealth," said the mother of one of the clinic's seven-year-old patients. "It is very convenient in our own hometown, and it has made all of the difference for Emma and her schooling."

Telehealth technology, enabled by LifeSize, is also especially valuable if multiple specialist consultations are needed in a single appointment.

"If a patient needs the opinion of one or more specialists during an appointment, the healthcare provider can simply call the other physician and receive their opinion immediately, rather than the traditional, lengthy referral process," explained Tonya Beach, director of program development at PPG.

"We believe telehealth is a key contributor to patient

satisfaction. Not only can they receive discreet treatment in a general hospital setting without the stigma of visiting a mental health clinic, they can also visit a location that is in their own community," said Beach. "In the field of mental health, this type of comfort and trust between doctor and patient is invaluable."

In the future, Premier Psych would like to implement mobile support for its video conferencing technology through LifeSize ClearSea, which would allow physicians to use their smartphone or tablet to dial-in to appointments.

"Telehealth is our passion at Premier Psych. We want to serve patients wherever they are, and our partnership with LifeSize can help make that possible," said Dr. Duffy. "We have had a good relationship with LifeSize since the beginning, and we know that with their help, we can offer the absolute best in health care to more patients than ever before."



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