



## Giving Mission – Creative Healthcare Support for the Disadvantaged

***Giving Mission presents the following as an idea of the potential role telemedicine could play in supporting your mission to serve the human health needs of economically disadvantaged populations. Please note that the following is one alternative of many we have available and is presented to stimulate solution-driven thought.***

*The key issue that we can see is the sheer number of underserved adults and children. At first blush, the number is staggering. How do you effectively reach such a large number of underserved people and maintain the health care provided to ensure continuity of care and long-term health maintenance? We offer telemedicine as a logical health care delivery vehicle to team with any plan to provide coordinated quality medical care to the largest number of service area individuals.*

### Telemedicine Highlights

- Telemedicine doctors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year.
- Telemedicine doctors can prescribe medications by phone or video and send those scripts to any pharmacy.
- Telemedicine doctors include primary care physicians and pediatricians, amongst other specialties.
- A telemedicine membership (be it monthly or annually) includes the entire immediate family - not just one individual. And the membership fee is unexpectedly reasonable, as low as \$5.00 per month, depending on the number of members in the group. The monthly membership fee could even be much lower if the membership level is into the thousands.
- There is no cost for the actual consult with the telemedicine physician. This factor will help overcome one of the key barriers to seeking medical assistance in a timely fashion, thus avoiding the escalation in the severity of the ailment.
- Telemedicine doctors can provide consults and treatment in many languages, including Spanish. Customer support is also offered in many languages - which is essential for providing medical aid in many service areas.
- Telemedicine doctors will coordinate/communicate consults and treatments with a designated primary care physician or clinic to help ensure continuity of care.
- Telemedicine consults happen, on average, within 30 minutes of initiating a request for service.
- Since telemedicine consults happen over the phone or online, there is no need for anyone to leave their job or home to receive treatment - they can consult with the physician wherever they are at the time of the consult.

### Potential Model

A possible model to help ensure both the broadest outreach possible and continuity of care would be to team telemedicine with any plan in such a way that telemedicine plays the role of gatekeeper. This approach is being seen more and more as part of consumer and employer insurance products.

A request for assistance or an appointment to consult with a doctor would first go to the telemedicine provider. After the fact, the telemedicine physician would provide a clinic with the consult details to update the patient's chart, ensuring continuity of care. The telemedicine physician would, in effect, triage the situation and either provide diagnosis and treatment or refer the individual to a clinic (or ER if appropriate) for diagnosis and treatment.

Using a model like this would significantly increase the timely delivery of medical services to the greatest number of adults and children while also improving the overall model's efficiency, clinical outcomes, and economic performance. This is just one possible delivery model teaming telemedicine with a stand-alone clinic. Whatever the model, the teaming of health care delivery systems will positively impact the sheer number of individuals served as well as the clinical outcomes achieved and optimal economic performance.

Something to think about: we welcome the opportunity to explore this and other approaches with you. Thanks so much for allowing us to share our thoughts, and we look forward to continuing the discussion.

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