

Delta Region Community Health Systems Development (DRCHSD) Program

Telehealth Webinar Series: Telehealth for Older Adults



The Center's Purpose

The National Rural Health Resource Center (The Center) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to sustaining and improving health care in rural communities. As the nation's leading technical assistance and knowledge center in rural health, The Center focuses on five core areas:

- Transition to Value and Population Health
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Performance Improvement
- Health Information Technology
- Workforce



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HRSA

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

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National
Rural Health
Resource Center

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Anti-racism



Building a culture where difference is valued

The Center is committed to DEI and anti-racism. We create an environment that reflects the communities we live in and serve; a place where everyone feels accepted and empowered to be their full, authentic selves; and where everyone belongs.

We understand the impact of and seek to defeat racism and discrimination in ourselves, our workplace, and the world. This guides how we cultivate leaders, build our programs and resources, and deliver our technical assistance.

We are an organization that honors, celebrates, and respects all dimensions of diversity. These principles are central to our mission and to our impact.

[Read more at ruralcenter.org/DEI](https://ruralcenter.org/DEI)

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Upcoming DRCHSD Webinars

- March 30
[National Health Services Corps Webinar](#)
- April 5
[Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Webinar Part 1: Welcome to FORHP!](#)
- April 12
[Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Webinar Part 2: Federal Grants 101](#)

Telehealth Webinar Series: Telehealth for Older Adults



David Fletcher, MBA

Associate Vice President

Center for Telehealth

Geisinger

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Tailoring Telemedicine for Older Adults

Geisinger

David Fletcher, MBA
Associate VP, Telehealth

Geisinger Health System

We believe the closer to the patient's home care is delivered, the less expensive and more convenient it is



Fully integrated regional healthcare provider



Network of local clinics and regional hospitals



Serves over 3 million patients

Telehealth: Patient Satisfaction – Geisinger Patients

- All patient populations surveyed appreciated the availability of telehealth.
- Patients aged 65–79 consistently rated telehealth higher relative to that same age range nationally than younger patients, with >80% also expressing overall satisfaction.
- Patient >80 years of age reported a >75% overall satisfaction score with telemedicine as well.
- **Results debunk the assumption that telehealth is more easily adopted by younger generations.**

Survey comments from our patients

“This is a wonderful service. I am disabled and don't drive that far. I feel safer doing the video visits as well.”

Neurology Patient

“This appointment was super simple to set up and much easier to go to than if it were in person.”

*Gynecology and
Obstetric Patient*

“I actually liked the video visit—was more relaxed.”

Gastroenterology Patient

Survey comments from our patients, continued

“I actually loved this option, since COVID started I now work from home, I didn't have to take extra time away from work traveling to and from the visit. It was an awesome alternative.”

Neurology Patient

“I felt the doctor was more attentive and allowed more time for discussion and explanation than in in-office visits.”

Family Medicine Patient

Survey findings – Central PA

q6

Overall, how would you rate your experiences with the following types of telemedicine services?

Video visit (through a health system's video platform or other platforms such as Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, etc.)

	Total
Total	N=74
Very satisfactory	55%
Somewhat satisfactory	28%
Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory	12%
Somewhat unsatisfactory	3%
Very unsatisfactory	1%

q7

How willing would you be to use the following types of telemedicine services in the future?

Video visit (through a health system's video platform or other platforms such as Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, etc.)

	Total
Total	N=245
Very willing	33%
Somewhat willing	26%
Neither willing nor unwilling	15%
Somewhat unwilling	10%
Very unwilling	16%

Survey findings

q9

Which aspects of telemedicine services are most appealing to you?

	Total
Total	N=245
I don't have to travel to/from my appointment	46%
I don't have to wait in a lobby or waiting room	44%
I don't have to be around people who may be sick	37%
No need to take time off of school or work	20%
The ability to receive a quick response	36%
The ability to access health care from a comfortable/convenient location	37%
In general, it's more convenient than in-person healthcare	36%
I find this type of visit to be less-stressful than an in-person visit	19%
Other, please specify:	1%
N/A – I do not find any aspects of telemedicine services appealing	24%
Count	3.01

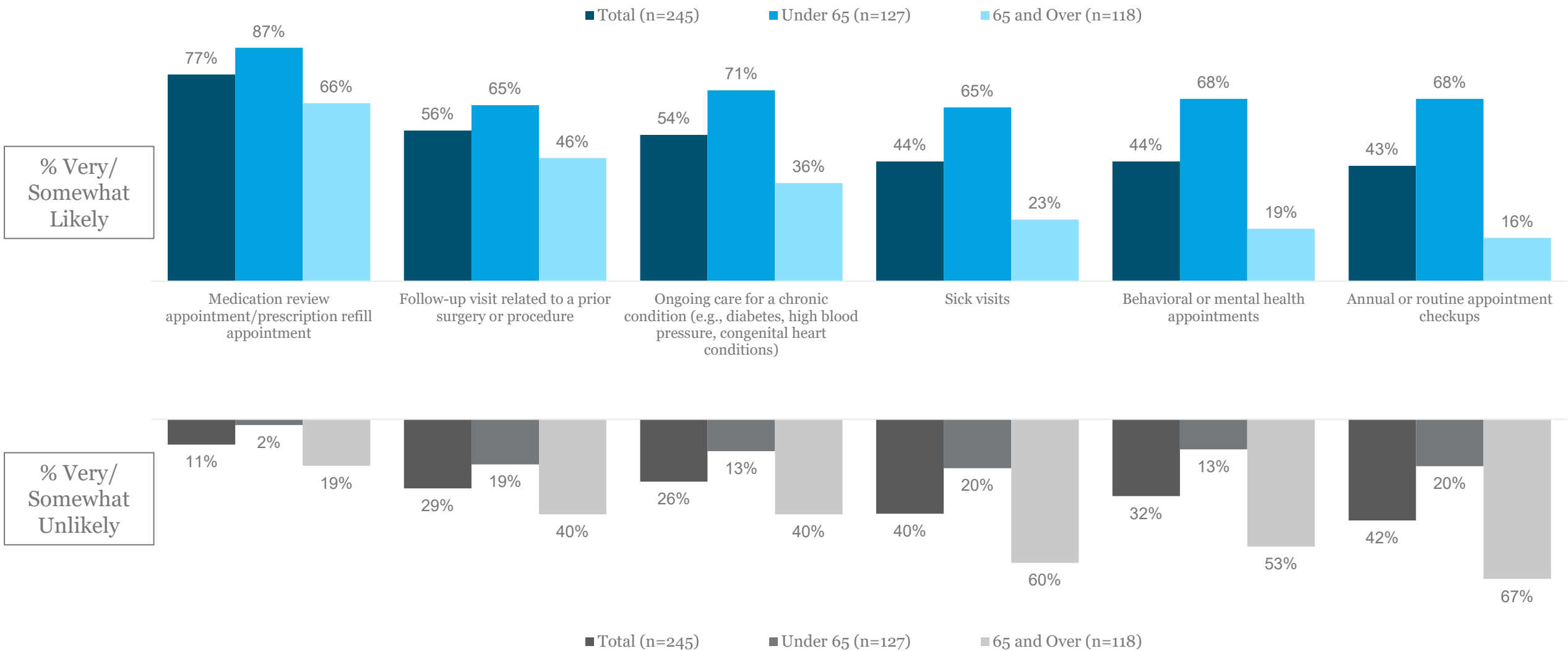
q10

What concerns, if any, do you have about using telemedicine services?

	Total
Total	N=245
Examinations may not be as complete as in-person visits	63%
Concern with security/privacy of the connection	21%
Concern with poor connections or frequent video buffering	29%
Concern with not always being able to speak with my usual doctor or medical professional	25%
I'm not as likely to create a rapport/relationship with the medical professional	21%
I would rather speak with someone face to face	45%
I likely will not be able to understand how to use the technology	13%
Other, please specify:	1%
N/A – I have no concerns about using telemedicine services	14%

Data courtesy of Geisinger Health System

Likelihood of Care via Telemedicine (2 of 2, by Age)



Geisinger at Home

1

Initial foray into last mile visits directly into patients' homes, sponsored by health plan to focus on members at high risk of ED utilization and readmission, providing extra support for a typically older population

2

Physician consults, assisted by nurses or community health assistants (CHA) who receive training from the telehealth team. The physician functions as the primary care provider and generates any necessary referrals.

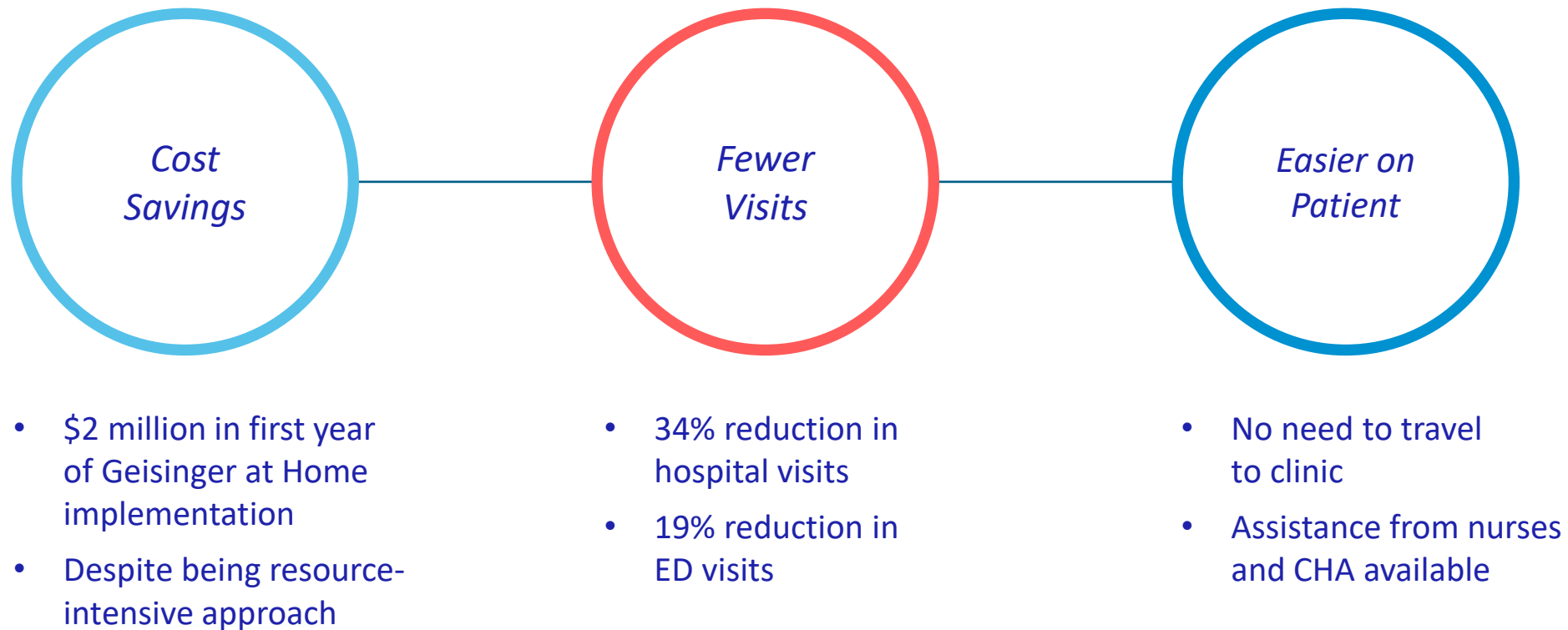
3

Technology/equipment – tablet, MiFi, peripherals brought to home by the nurse or CHA.

Telemedicine in the Home—Assisted



Home-based Care Impact Pre-Pandemic



*Challenge: Create
scalable solution for
patients, regardless
of infrastructure or
technical expertise*



*How do provide local
sources for patients
throughout our catchment
area?*



*How will patients be able to start
scheduled visits or initiate urgent
care from their homes?*

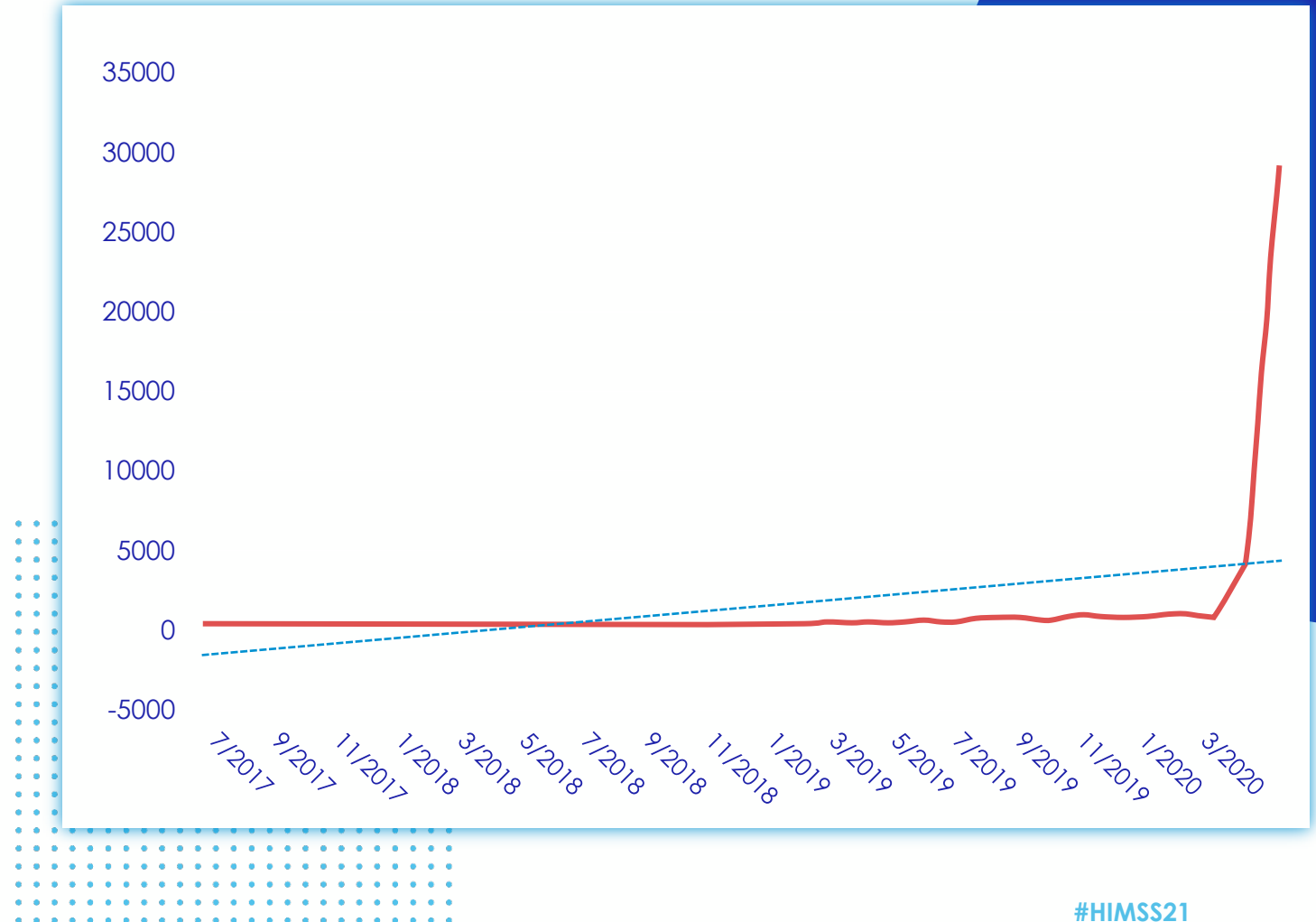


*How can we provide patient
support when they are in
their homes?*

Rapid Expansion of Scheduled Unassisted Visits in Home

- Pandemic drastically increased telemedicine usage
- Scheduled telemedicine visits account for about 12% of outpatient visits with over 90% of those directly to the patient's home

Synchronous visits

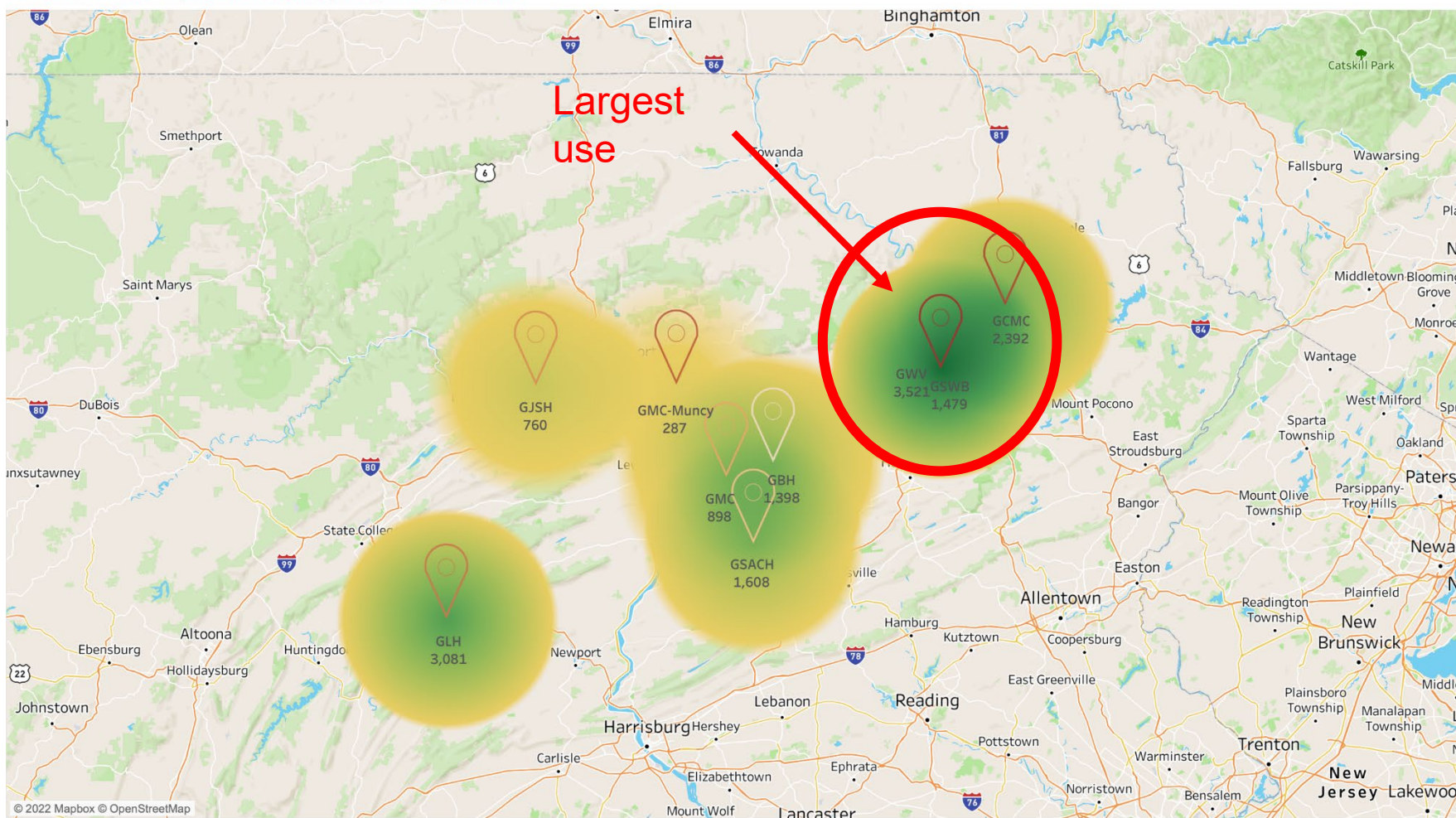


Regionalization of Care at Hospitals Throughout Catchment Area

- To bring care closer to our patient population, Geisinger built out telemedicine capabilities at hospitals throughout the region
- Regionalization of care improves ease of use and efficient distribution of subspecialty care

Cart Utilization

*Yellow & Green Bubbles represents #Visits density with green being more dense



Map based on Longitude (generated) and Latitude (generated). For marks layer City: Color shows sum of Grand Total. The marks are labeled by Hospital Location and sum of Grand Total. Details are shown for City and Hospital Location. For marks layer City (2): Color shows details about City.

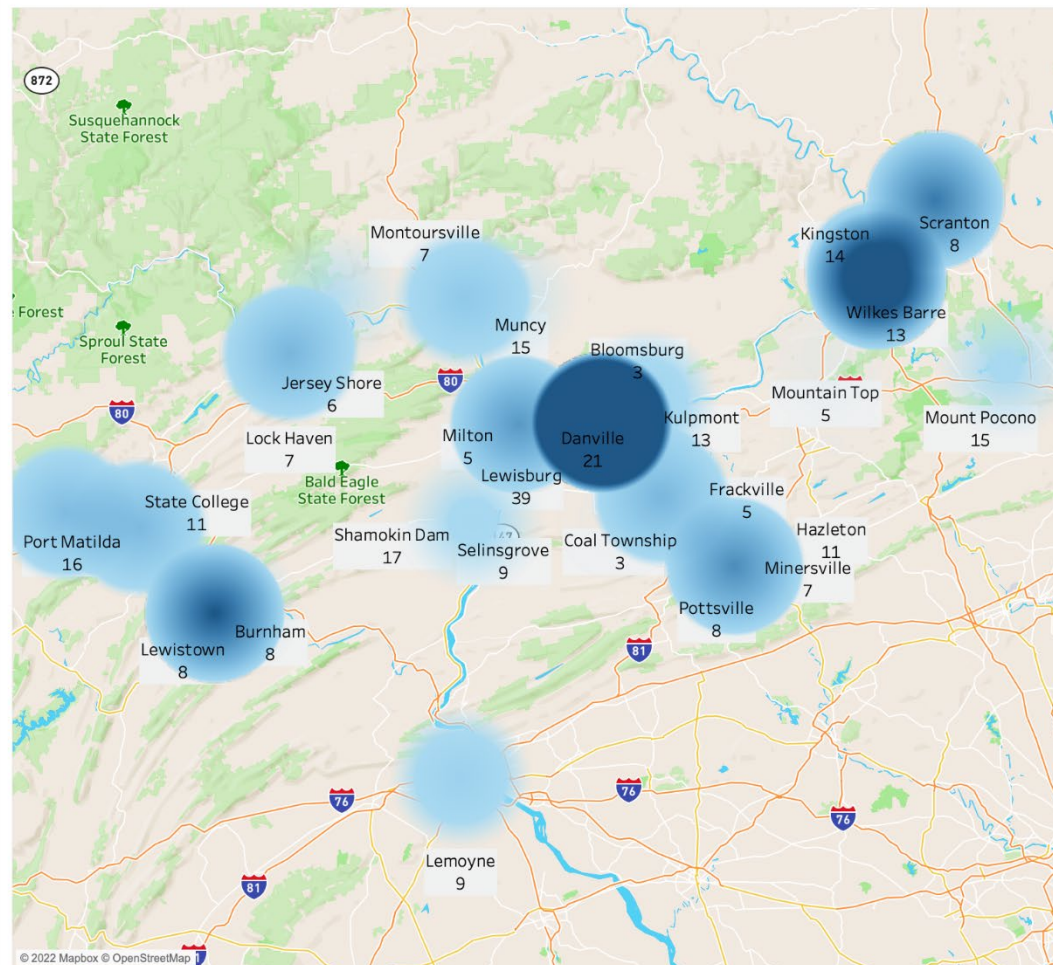
In Clinic Telemedicine Visit distance from patient home to visit with volumes

- The next progression in delivering care closer to patients' homes was establishing telemedicine in their community clinics
- Used for primary care or specialty patients without access to broadband or when peripheral devices are needed
- Local clinic staff room the patients and facilitate the exam until the provider excuses them from room

Video to Clinic - City/Avg.Distance

*Visits with up to 100 miles of distance between Patient Zip & Visit Zip are considered

*Blue Bubbles represents #Visits density with dark blue being more dense



Visit City	# Visits	Avg. Distance..
Danville	4,529	21
Wilkes Barre	744	13
Lewistown	565	8
Scranton	416	8
Kingston	335	14
Pottsville	281	Longest Avg. Distance
Lewisburg	281	39
Lock Haven	161	7
Kulpmont	157	13
State Colle..	147	11
Port Matilda	138	16
Montoursvi..	83	7
Lemoyne	54	9
Bloomsburg	44	3
Selinsgrove	24	9
Mount POCO..	24	15
Burnham	20	8
Jersey Shore	18	6
Minersville	16	7
Muncy	15	15
Shamokin D..	5	17
Mountain T..	4	5
Milton	3	5
Frackville	3	5
Coal Towns..	2	3
Hazleton	1	11

Virtual Urgent Care

1

*AI assisted chatbot driven solution for patients to
Initiate care from their homes*

2

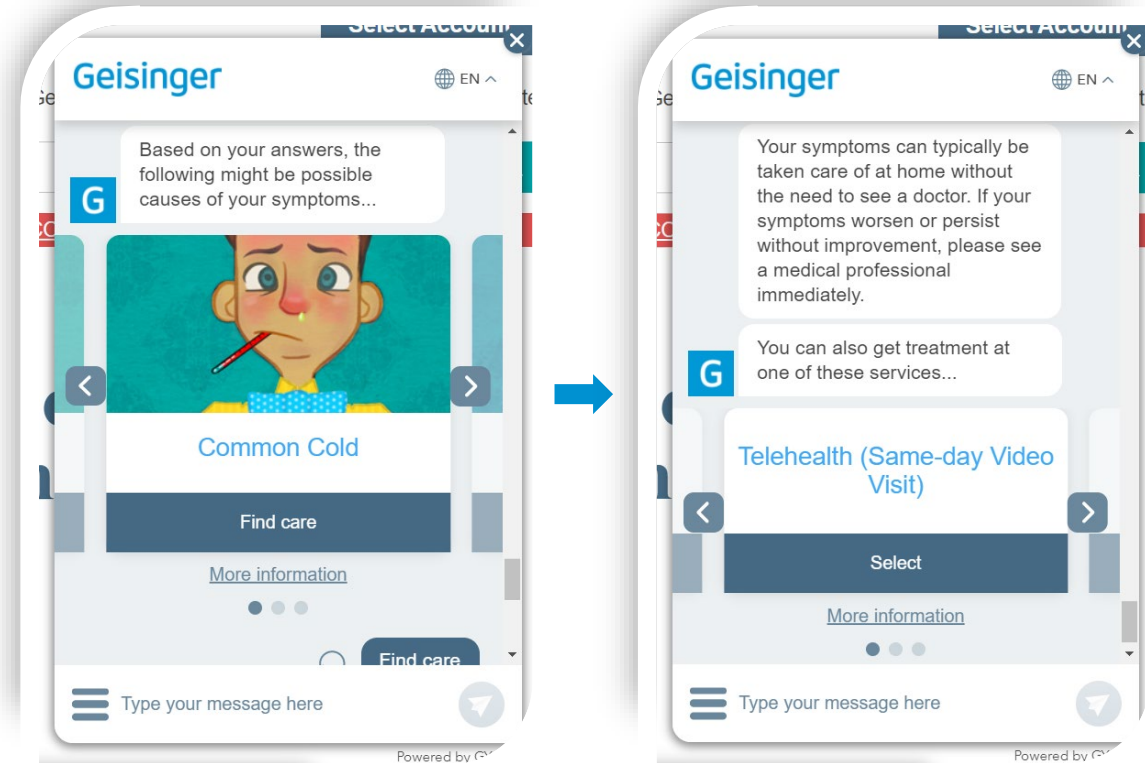
*Piloted with existing urgent care and primary care
providers*

3

*Facilitated by virtual care assistant staff who register
the patient, ensure patient is good candidate for virtual
urgent care, and schedule with PCP or specialist as
necessary*

Patient-Initiated Care

- Geisinger Virtual Assistant (chatbot) routes patient to Virtual Urgent Care online waiting room.
- Patient connects with Virtual Care Assistant (VCA) and is offered a video visit with an urgent care provider, or they can be scheduled for a same-day visit with a Community Medicine provider later in the day.
- VCA uses existing capacity at our urgent care sites and open slots on Community Medicine provider schedules.
- Hours of operation are:
 - Monday – Friday 9 AM – 7 PM
 - Saturday – Sunday 8 AM – 5 PM



Conclusions

- Survey data indicates that health systems should not make assumptions about who will want to participate in telemedicine visits based on demographic groupings
- Workflows should be kept simple and minimize unnecessary log-ins and downloads
- When working with clinicians to determine visits that are appropriate for telemedicine, it is important to keep patient needs in mind and share rationale with patients as well
- Telemedicine can be used as a tool to decrease health disparities but can create additional barriers to health equity if not thoughtfully implemented

Thank you!

Geisinger

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Questions or Comments



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