

# South Denver Gastroenterology's Patients Love Virtual Visits

## Pursue an untapped opportunity

South Denver Gastroenterology (SDG) initiated telehealth in 2018 as a strategy to increase market share. As the first GI (gastrointestinal) group in the area to offer telehealth, they had virtual visits in place when COVID-19 hit.

"The pandemic pressed us to maximize our video visit capabilities," said Theresa Lee, MD, partner at SDG. "It challenged patients, and, to be honest, some of our providers, to get comfortable with the technology. This accelerated us to leverage telehealth even better than we were before."

## Necessity inspires confidence

In pre-pandemic times, out of SDG's 22 physicians, a third were heavy virtual visit users, a third were light users, and a third had used it only once. By April, all physicians were regularly engaging with patients virtually.

"When we were no longer able to see patients in person, the remaining physicians quickly became comfortable with using telehealth," said Dr. Lee.

SDG providers' confidence in virtual visits improved as they routinely performed back-to-back visits, managed the workflow, and conducted intake for new patients. Any visit became eligible as government restrictions eased.

"Virtual visits give patients a safe platform to explain symptoms, ask questions before a procedure, or receive routine follow-up," said Dr. Lee. "In-person visits and physical exams could be scheduled if the patient needed to be evaluated differently, for example, if they complained of worrisome pain."

SDG's virtual visit use per month during the rise of the pandemic increased more than 50 times. In April, there were 2,000 visits among all providers, compared to the practice's average pre-pandemic levels of 30–40 visits before March.

## EHR integration makes life easy

Providers appreciate how the virtual visit solution integrates into the EHR. This eases the check-in and appointment creation processes. For example, when a patient logs in, they're automatically checked into the EHR.

"It's as if a medical assistant had checked them into the room and clicked a button," said Dr. Lee. "When patients go online to reschedule a virtual visit appointment, the schedule change is simultaneously made in the EHR. A doctor can also generate a new appointment easily through the solution and EHR simultaneously. It's nice to have one action that communicates with two systems."

## CLIENT PROFILE

### South Denver Gastroenterology, P.C.

**Location:** Four offices and three ambulatory surgical centers in the Denver metropolitan area

**Background:** South Denver Gastroenterology delivers comprehensive, exceptional care with optimal outcomes for gastrointestinal, pancreatic and liver diseases, including colon cancer, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, gastroesophageal reflux, Hepatitis C, and cirrhosis.

## NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE SOLUTION

- NextGen Virtual Visits™

## HIGHLIGHTS

50X

**More than 50X:** virtual visit use increased to 2,000 in April compared to the pre-pandemic average of 30–40 per month



**Expedited** check-in processes



**Simplified** workflow with full integration to enable access to patients for providers using technology that already integrates with their EHR

## Positive patient satisfaction

SDG providers and staff realized the importance of walking new patients through the virtual visit process before appointments. Older patients, who at first were not comfortable seeing their provider on a screen, often found the process simpler than expected and are now satisfied with their care. Helping patients adjust to virtual visits has contributed to the good reviews from patient surveys:

- “Could be at home and not travel to the office an hour away.”
- “This kind of visit is so much more accessible.”

Even in a season where empty waiting rooms are the norm, doctors can still connect with patients at an emotional, personalized level. Although they are not in the office, patients, particularly new ones, can still establish good rapport with their provider virtually.



“The past months have taught me that we can find new ways to deliver great care in the face of a challenge.”

Theresa Lee, MD  
Partner  
South Denver Gastroenterology



## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Partner with us at **855-510-6398** or **results@nextgen.com**.