

CareMount Medical Evolves into Integrated Virtual Care

THE CHALLENGE

Administrative workload increases due to lack of integration

When CareMount Medical initiated virtual visits in 2017, telehealth adoption was slow. When the multi-specialty medical group found itself in the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, they quickly recognized the need to transition from in-person visits to a virtual environment. Fear of contagion caused patients to cancel in-office appointments as the government implemented strict restrictions on in-person gatherings. Under normal conditions, the process of adding CareMount's 650-plus providers to its telehealth platform would have taken approximately three to six months, but CareMount made the conversion from in-office to virtual in just two weeks.

At the height of the pandemic, CareMount pulled more than 50 staff members from other locations within the medical group to establish a first-of-its-kind Virtual Visit Communication Center. At the height of the pandemic, CareMount conducted approximately 1,500 virtual visits a day and successfully delivered virtual care to patients when they needed it most.

CareMount quickly ramped up the Virtual Communication Center, which offered a 1-800 phone number to help ease patients into the telehealth environment. In addition, CareMount initiated a comprehensive public relations campaign to educate patients about the benefits of telehealth and how to schedule an online virtual appointment with their own preferred provider.

During the virtual appointment, patients and their providers discussed COVID-19 or non-COVID-19 health concerns, prescription refills, and made determinations regarding the need for in-person care. Patients were extremely satisfied with the ability to schedule a telehealth visit online, with either their primary care provider or a provider from more than 30 other medical specialties.

However, there were two significant problems with the workflow. First, CareMount's virtual visit platform was not integrated with the practice's electronic health record (EHR), which caused numerous hours of additional work and many challenges for staff. Second, patients who wanted to be seen virtually were required to download an app on their mobile device and enter registration information. This cumbersome process required CareMount staff to provide patients with extensive technical assistance.

"CareMount providers and staff worked non-stop to boost the medical group's telehealth platform during the pandemic," said Nicholas Korchinski, CIO at CareMount Medical. "Patients needed access to healthcare and wanted to talk to a provider who knew them and knew their medical history. Yet, the process to create and deliver an appointment was labor-intensive and necessitated a lot of hand-holding to facilitate a successful virtual visit."

The inefficiencies of patients who had to download a virtual visit app and the disjointed data flow between the app and the clinical EHR platform led CareMount to seek a better solution.

CLIENT PROFILE

CareMount Medical, P.C.

Headquartered:

Westchester County, New York

Background: CareMount Medical is the largest independent multi-specialty medical group in New York State with over 45 locations and more than 650 providers across 50 specialties. CareMount provides comprehensive medical care to 665,000 patients from birth through adulthood and offers on-site laboratory, radiology, endoscopy and infusion suites, as well as urgent care.

NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE SOLUTION

- NextGen Virtual Visits™

HIGHLIGHTS



5 minutes: average time to prepare an appointment for delivery (the previous telehealth solution required 20 minutes)



1,500 = number of virtual visits conducted per day during the height of the pandemic



2 weeks = time it took to convert 650 providers to the telehealth platform



Enhanced communication tool for patients and physicians



Benefited from vendor support, technology, and security



Advanced value-based care model

THE SOLUTION

A new day in virtual visits

In April 2020, CareMount investigated multiple options for a new virtual health environment and ultimately selected NextGen Virtual Visits™. Within a month, the platform was seamlessly integrated with the medical group's EHR and required no patient app or registration process. In three days, more than 250 providers were trained on the system.

"With NextGen Virtual Visits, the time to book and execute a virtual visit is no more than creating a regular office visit," said Korchinski. "Integration with the scheduling platform is more efficient and effective. That's the return that we immediately noticed when our schedulers could book an appointment with no extra cost or time."

Since the solution is web-based, users aren't required to download an app. Patients follow a few easy steps to prepare for their virtual visits. To join, a patient simply clicks on a link from their phone, which launches the browser and opens the visit. The telehealth platform is fully integrated with the EHR, which allows providers to immediately "on-the-fly" schedule follow-up appointments, send referrals, or obtain patient-consent forms. This functionality was of critical importance, especially at the time when many providers worked from home without the direct support of staff.

Bold decision to change yields big results

CareMount staff dedicated considerable time to educate patients about the availability and benefits of telehealth visits. Before NextGen Virtual Visits, CareMount staff had to assist patients with the app download, registration, and enter duplicative personal health information on their mobile devices. Clinicians also addressed workflow inefficiencies because the program and the EHR were not integrated. The decision to change virtual platform technology in the middle of the pandemic was bold, but the results were outstanding.

"Many of these struggles disappeared after implementing NextGen Virtual Visits," said Korchinski. "The new solution was integrated with our EHR, which enabled us to dismantle the Virtual Communication Center, return staff to their original positions, increase productivity, and give hours back in the day to our providers and teams."

THE RESULTS

Healthcare transformation in a heartbeat

As the duration of the pandemic took hold, CareMount recognized an urgent need to take care of elderly patients and those with chronic conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes. Administrative leaders recognized two critical developments during the pandemic—the need to safely protect patients from the virus through distanced care delivery and to encourage patients to not delay critical preventive care.

Telehealth became a vital safety measure for the delivery of care. It continues to be an important vehicle for patients and their doctors to discuss health concerns. But for more prominent health issues, the virtual visit did not and will not completely replace the physical visit. To keep patients safe in the office, CareMount made changes to its patient flow.

"Our operations team divided essential office visits into two timeframes—wellness visits held in the morning, and sick visits held in the afternoon," said Korchinski. "We made a conscious effort to separate our patients as they visited the office and used the window of transition to disinfect the offices."

"Integration with the scheduling platform is more efficient and effective. That's the return that we immediately noticed when our schedulers could book an appointment with no extra cost or time."

Nicholas Korchinski
Chief Information Officer
CareMount Medical

With virtual visits, the medical group reduced the number of in-person visits, which improved the success of the new in-office workflows. When the pandemic restrictions began to subside, CareMount was able to safely bring more patients back into the office. However, because of the popularity and success of virtual visits, the medical group continues to use telehealth to see about 500 patients a day.

“Our virtual patient appointments are popular with patients of all ages. NextGen Virtual Visits enables us to meet patient and provider choice and ensures that access to optimal healthcare can be satisfied without the need to physically come into the office,” said Korchinski.

New opportunity to expand care

Traditionally, when patients need care, they call the medical group and schedule an office visit or walk-in to one of our urgent care locations. Depending on the patient’s needs, a virtual urgent care visit can replace an in-person visit.

“Virtual Urgent Care is a new service that CareMount offers to patients in New York State. Patients can see a provider within 15 minutes and have a face-to-face discussion virtually,” said Korchinski. “Our virtual visit options provide patients greater access to care while giving the medical group new sources of revenue.”

A solution that suits value-based care

CareMount continues to transition to the value-based care model that rewards providers for the triple aim—elevate the patient experience, improve the health of populations, and reduce healthcare costs.

“We have a robust care coordination and communication system in place for our patients,” said Korchinski. “When our area became the epicenter of the pandemic, we realized the need to pivot our focus and provide virtual care to the most vulnerable patients in our population.”

The virtual visit platform is here to stay and enables seamless continuity of care.

“It’s important that we don’t lose the momentum that telehealth has gained during the pandemic. Providers can’t do this alone. We need payers to continue to reward and encourage telehealth—specifically by promoting telehealth parity—by reimbursing virtual visits at the same rates as in-office visits.”

Nicholas Korchinski
Chief Information Officer
CareMount Medical

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

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