

FirstCare MEDICAL GROUP

SPECIALTY: PRIMARY AND URGENT CARE

Building an ideal care management solution and improving patient relationships with telemedicine

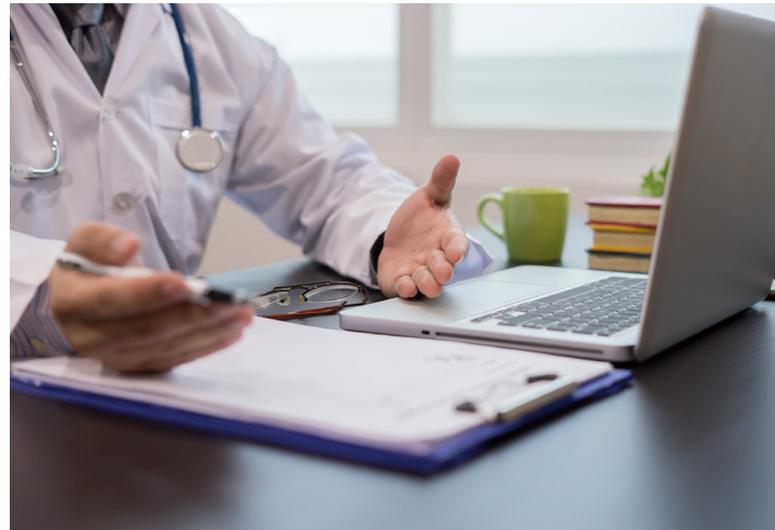
Overview

Since 1984, [FirstCare Medical Group](#) of New Jersey has been providing high-quality care as a primary care provider and as an urgent care clinic. From sudden illnesses to minor injuries, walk-in appointments are always welcome—regardless of whether you are a new or existing patient. Jennifer Crawford, a physician assistant and manager at FirstCare, explains how telemedicine has helped extend practice hours and improve care management with patients.

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Challenge

FirstCare initially began searching for telemedicine as a care management solution. They were hoping to find a better way to keep in touch with patients and enhance the patient experience. **By meeting with patients on a more regular schedule over video visits instead of over the phone, FirstCare staff could provide more effective care.** As Crawford states, “You simply don’t receive the same type of response over the phone as during a face-to-face visit with a patient.” Additionally, FirstCare was looking for ways to convert care management appointments into billable encounters since phone calls were not reimbursable in the practice.



Solution

After FirstCare researched telemedicine solutions for almost nine months, Chiron Health caught their attention due to the sophisticated integration with their current EHR, Greenway Prime Suite. One of the most important features FirstCare desired in a telemedicine solution was the ability to maintain a streamlined workflow, and Chiron was the only platform on the market to offer just this. **With Chiron’s integration with Greenway, all video visits are scheduled using Greenway’s scheduling software—just like in-office visits.** Appointments then sync automatically with Chiron Health. No duplicate work is ever required.

Overall, Chiron Health has allowed FirstCare Medical Group to **build stronger relationships with patients while providing flexibility** for both patients and providers.



Results

FirstCare has been able to extend its hours even further after implementing Chiron Health. As a new mom, Crawford is able to work from home to be with her newborn and see patients during non-standard clinic hours. She often sees patients as early as 6:30 a.m. and as late as 9:30 p.m.

“If someone wants a visit at 6:30 in the morning, it allows me to do the visit without leaving the house. It allows the provider as much flexibility as the patient,” she explains.

During the initial research of adding telemedicine to FirstCare’s practice, Crawford read findings from other clinics stating telemedicine works best for mid-morning appointments. However, she found the opposite to be true for FirstCare: “Demand seems to be evenings or early mornings before work.” At this time, they are working around patients’ schedules and their demand while they roll out this option to all patients. “I had a child who was in school plays and didn’t get home until 9:30 at night, so we conducted her visits then,” Crawford shares. FirstCare patients are seeing an added convenience and peace of mind. Video visits on a Sunday night, or other times clinics traditionally think of as after-hours, allow the practice to provide urgent care and answer questions from patients like “Do I need to go to the ER, or can I come in to do an in-office visit on Monday?” The FirstCare telemedicine program is providing a high-quality care experience for patients that is timely and convenient.

FirstCare primarily uses telemedicine to manage chronic care patients. One specific use case is to see patients for routine blood pressure checks. “Typically we see patients for blood pressure rechecks every three to six months,” Crawford explains. “If they are up to date on their blood work and have a blood pressure cuff at home that we’ve verified is accurate in-office, we offer to see them over telemedicine for every other blood pressure check-in.” This option allows patients more flexibility in their schedules, and lets them save time by not having to come into the office. **“So far, our patients are in love with telemedicine, and there are repeat clients who want to do this as opposed to coming to the practice.”**

Because the doctors’ schedules are so busy with scheduled in-office visits as well as walk-ins, Crawford was the ideal candidate to start rolling out the option of telemedicine to a selected group of patients who qualify for this type of visit. Although FirstCare is early in Chiron Health adoption, they are scheduling three or more additional appointments weekly and expect to see this number rise in the upcoming months.



Conclusion

Overall, Chiron Health has allowed FirstCare Medical Group to build stronger relationships with patients while providing flexibility for both patients and providers. “Chiron enables us to work remotely for the practice. We use Chiron to work weekends, holidays, or to fill in for providers during vacation,” Crawford says. “One provider will begin conducting telemedicine visits soon after her maternity leave. She thought about not coming back to work after maternity leave, and telemedicine gives her the option to still see patients and come back to work.” Of all of the features Chiron Health has to offer, support tops the list in Crawford’s eyes: **“Chiron support has been fantastic. Since we have a lot of older patients, knowing our patients have the support they need through Chiron is a huge help for us.”**

In terms of care management, Crawford states that the initial triage of seeing a patient over video versus simply hearing a description of systems over the phone has been a tremendous asset in building and maintaining relationships with patients.

FirstCare Medical Group is excited to see how telemedicine can assist and change the practice as a whole. “We’ve been working hard on changing policies and ideas for the practice,” Crawford says, adding: “One physician stated that by 2018, he wants more telemedicine visits than in-office visits because that’s the way things should be done in the future.”

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Find out how you can produce similar results in your practice by scheduling a demo with Chiron Health.