

Telemedicine Helps Create Access for Future Care

By Bobby Gulab, MD



Telemedicine is here—and here to stay for Beebe Healthcare and its medical group. Beebe Medical Group rapidly accelerated our program early during the COVID-19 pandemic because we saw a need: People were not seeking healthcare.

We wanted to provide access for residents practicing social and physical distancing at home during the pandemic, so Beebe Medical Group began offering telemedicine visits across all offices.

During the first week of April 2020, more than 1,000 visits were conducted across all of Beebe Medical Group. By August, we eclipsed 12,500 visits, and we're continuing to grow even as social and physical distancing restrictions have slightly loosened.

All of our offices remained open for in-person visits, but we wanted to provide an option for those who wished to see their provider virtually. A patient only needs access to a computer or smart device, an email address, and basic computer skills. Assistance and instructional help can be provided upon setup. Between Beebe's patient portal and this technology, all patient information remains confidential and protected through the system.

The investment in technology by Beebe was not just at the medical group level. Home Care Services also provides telehealth to monitor and connect



Bobby Gulab, MD, MBA, received his medical degree in 2005 from Ross University School of Medicine, Dominica. Dr. Gulab holds an MBA in healthcare concentration from the University of Delaware. Joining Beebe Medical Group in 2012, Dr. Gulab is a part-time internal medicine provider in our Beebe Primary Care - Lewes office, a part-time provider with Beebe's Hospital Medicine team, and the chief medical officer with Beebe Medical Group.

with patients virtually either pre- or post-procedure.

Patients having face-to-face time with their provider is a key component of clinical care as well as the mental well-being of a patient. During a telemedicine visit, they will see the provider, have the opportunity to ask questions, and perform any tasks with regular household items so the provider can create an assessment and plan—just like an in-office visit.

What's most exciting is the future that telemedicine holds in Sussex County. Growing up here, I understand that our rural area presents issues for access to care. With the growth of Beebe's telemedicine program, we have already started to close that gap for those without the necessary transportation to seek medical care.

Thank you for giving us the privilege of caring for you. Even at home, we are here.

Beebe Healthcare is a not-for-profit community healthcare system with a charitable mission to encourage healthy living, prevent illness, and restore optimal health for the people who live in, work in, and visit the communities we serve. Beebe Healthcare has three campuses: the Margaret H. Rollins Lewes Campus, which houses the medical center; the Rehoboth Health Campus; and the South Coastal Health Campus. Beebe Healthcare offers primary care as well as specialized services in the areas of cardiovascular, oncology, orthopaedics, general surgery, robotic surgery, and women's health. Beebe also offers walk-in care, lab, imaging, and physical rehabilitation services at several locations throughout Sussex County, in addition to a home health program and a comprehensive community health program. For more information about Beebe Healthcare, visit beebehealthcare.org.