

Virtual ICU Initiative Expands Access for Rural Patients

About Corewell Health West



Corewell Health[™]

Corewell Health West is a ten-hospital region within the Corewell Health system that serves 13 counties

in West Michigan. It includes a level 1 trauma center, a dedicated children’s hospital and critical access hospitals. Providing high-quality, safe care is central to Corewell Health’s mission.

Virtual ICU Program

Corewell Health West’s Quality, Safety and Patient Experience programs have been nationally recognized for their high-quality outcomes. By identifying areas for improvement, bringing multidisciplinary teams together and engaging the Hospital’s Board, Corewell Health West has implemented several successful initiatives to improve patient safety and care quality.

For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Corewell Health West realized it needed to provide a higher level of care in its community and critical access hospitals. They were able to rapidly roll out an initiative by working with its quaternary care hospital and the pulmonary and critical care physicians to provide ‘virtual ICU’ care. By utilizing telemedicine, rural patients were able to receive care at their local hospital.

Due to the success of the virtual ICU initiative and the ability to keep patients local, Corewell Health partnered with its telemedicine team to add additional service lines. Over the last few years, the health system’s telemedicine capabilities have expanded to include cardiology, infectious disease, palliative care, stroke, neurology, pulmonology and wound care services.

Program Results

Both patients and providers have embraced the virtual ICU initiative. Patients deeply appreciate being able to receive top-quality care from a specialist at another hospital that they might not be able to access otherwise. Providers, including hospital teams and primary care providers, have experienced strengthened collaboration and seamless communication.

A recent service line addition to Corewell’s initiative is the Advanced Heart Failure team. Through this collaboration, the system can bring specialists to the bedside during the acute care phase of a patient’s stay, as well as provide follow-up care after the patient has left the hospital. This has resulted in a reduced length of stay for acute heart failure exacerbations and a reduced readmission rate after the patient’s discharge.

By bringing together health care professionals to talk about successes, challenges and opportunities for growth, Corewell Health is continuing to foster a culture of safety across its entire system.

