

Quick Start Guide

Telemedicine and Correctional Healthcare

Correctional healthcare is riddled with challenges. Complex challenges can make providing inmate care difficult, expensive, and dangerous. Inmates need more extensive care than the general population and prisons are ground zero for the opioid epidemic and mental health crisis. But prisons are designed with captivity in mind – not care.

As a result, prisons exist within an uncomfortable duality. They have the opportunity to improve population health by treating inmates in a controlled environment – but they face formidable barriers in the form of rising costs, high risk and limited treatment options.

Only one solution is lightening their burden: telemedicine.

CHALLENGE

1

Providing Timely Medical and Behavioral Care

- Physician shortages
- Remote locations
- Pressure to provide preventable hospitalizations
- Transporting inmates that may be co-mingled with the general public at advanced care facilities
- Shortage of behavioral care and addiction treatment
- Serious mentally ill (SMI) patients need a greater level of care without enough staff to maintain the care they need.

SOLUTION

Telemedicine Connects Inmates to Quality and Timely Care

- Specialists and primary care providers (PCPs) can treat inmates remotely, bringing them responsible and timely care.
- On-site prison PCPs and other clinicians can collaborate by video with specialists, improving the coordination of care.
- Inmates diagnosed with a rare condition or can be treated by a specialist experienced in that condition – even when there isn't a provider in the area who understands it.
- Instead of trying to deal with an inmate going through addiction withdrawal or overdose on their own, jails can connect with experienced addiction experts at opioid treatment centers.
- On-site staff can also address addiction within prison communities through virtual medication assisted treatment (MAT) and evidence-base behavioral therapy.
- Inmates with mental illness can receive more consistent psychiatric care, reducing problematic behavior.

CHALLENGE 2

Reducing the High Cost of Prison Care

- Correctional healthcare cost \$7.7 billion of an overall \$38.6 billion in correctional spending
- The annual estimate for the opioid epidemic is \$78.5 billion per year, much of which falls upon correctional systems
- The cost to transport inmates to hospitals costs \$90 million annually across the nation
- This does not include the cost of armed guards, vehicles and other forms of transportation
- Time consuming reviews from panels of physicians and nurses

SOLUTION

Telemedicine Reduces Healthcare Costs

- Virtual care delivery can eliminate unnecessary medical tests, external trips and inpatient stays – dramatically reducing transportation costs.
- Providers can help identify offenders who are faking a condition simply to leave the prison.
- Better preventive care results in fewer emergency room visits, fewer panel reviews and mitigates the cost of more advanced medical procedures.
- Targeted medical expertise can help to identify subtle problems that might otherwise be overlooked, resulting in faster recovery.
- In-house palliative care can keep dying inmates in prison walls, instead of being transferred to costly outside hospice programs.
- Instead of transferring elderly or sick inmates to correctional institutions close to a specific hospital, prisons can base inmate placement on fiscal strategy.
- Prisons have more choice in hiring specialists and medical consultants, which gives them a stronger negotiating position in compensation.



Case Study: Texas Department of Criminal Justice

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice wanted to manage costs and ensure quality care for inmates in more than 30 prisons. Using GlobalMed telemedicine solutions, they partnered with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and the University of Texas Medical Branch to [launch a virtual care delivery program](#).

- The program stopped 85 percent of Texas inmates from leaving the prison for healthcare.
- With transportation and guard costs estimated at \$350 per visit, in just one year, Texas saved an estimated \$3,198,300 through 9,138 inmate telemedicine encounters.
- The program ultimately saved the TDCJ \$780 million over 14 years.

CHALLENGE 3

Reducing Risk and Increasing Safety

- Every month, 45,000 inmates leave prisons to interact with the public to receive care.
- Increased risk of escape and attack requiring increased security

SOLUTION

Telemedicine Keeps Inmates Within Prison Walls

- Inmates can receive advanced care within their facility through remote consultations – eliminating the risk of escape or attack.
- Providers reluctant to provide in-person care to inmates can deliver treatment from afar, increasing the prison's ability to recruit and retain clinicians.
- Hospitals can reduce the extreme measures required to provide inmate care and focus their budget and time on treating other patients.

Case Study: California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS)



CCHCS operates a state-run correctional managed care telemedicine program. In 2010, they began using GlobalMed solutions to provide better inmate care and reduce costs by keeping inmates on site.

- Inmates remotely receive primary care and expertise in more than 30 medical specialties, including cardiology, dermatology, gastroenterology, HIV, infectious disease, nephrology, orthopedics, pulmonology, rheumatology, urology & many more.
- Administrators have increased public safety and decreased their medical transportation costs.
- In addition to procuring better provider coverage during military and maternity leave, CCHCS has improved staff retention and recruitment.
- The program increased from 16,000 virtual encounters in 2010 to more than 70,000 in 2018.
- They expanded specialist access from 30 specialists in 4 locations to 200 specialists in 22 locations by 2018.
- Their cost savings on healthcare and transportation costs topped \$25 million in 2017-18.



Correctional healthcare has been in a state of crisis for years. Now telemedicine has opened the door to healthier economics and healthier prison populations. It's time for American correctional systems to join the virtual care delivery world and reinvent their potential for a constructive and cost-effective future.

Learn more about how we can help you.

Contact us at 480-922-0044 or at telehealth@globalmed.com

[Get the Complete Guide to Correctional Telemedicine](#)