

Case Study



Portable connectivity,
working in a better way

The Challenge

Making the connection: Multidisciplinary Cancer Conferences

Cancer Care Ontario spearheaded the establishment of MCCs—Multidisciplinary Cancer Conferences—to ensure that cancer patients receive the benefits of a multidisciplinary approach to treatment. Oncologist Dr. Robert El-Maraghi is an advocate for, and active member of, MCCs in Ontario. An experienced room-based telemedicine physician, Dr. El-Maraghi recently participated in OTN's pilot of the next generation of telemedicine—Personal Videoconferencing.

Before the introduction of telemedicine, Dr. El-Maraghi often attended multidisciplinary meetings by telephone. The sound was poor and his contribution limited because he was unable to see the images shared with the diagnostic team. The introduction of room-based videoconferencing allowed him to see images, but brought with it the challenge of travel and time constraints.

The Solution

Working in a better Way: Personal Videoconferencing

Personal Videoconferencing is a web-based telemedicine service from OTN. During the pilot, Dr. El-Maraghi participated in 10 MCC meetings, a handful of office related meetings and three or four educational events. He embraced Personal Videoconferencing because he could contribute and participate fully in sessions from anywhere. The sound and image quality was often better than that provided by a room-based system.

In addition to his work with MCCs, and development of physician educational initiatives, Dr. El-Maraghi is Chief of Oncology, Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Centre, Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre. With more meetings than ever to attend, Personal Videoconferencing, he said, “... *improved the quality of my work life. Personal Videoconferencing allows me to be there, but not be there,*” Dr. El-Maraghi explained. *“I am able to perform in a better way.”*

He welcomed the wealth of additional information that can be garnered because the Personal Videoconferencing user can see the body language of the people with whom he or she is communicating. Dr. El-Maraghi noted that Personal Videoconferencing will run in tandem with room-based videoconferencing.

“I can participate as a member of a team from anywhere. The service delivers portable connectivity to a multidisciplinary team of specialists.”

The Benefits

Portable connectivity

CCO mandates the use of videoconferencing for organizations without the required specialists in-house. With Personal Videoconferencing, virtual MCCs do not require specialists to gather physically in facilities with room-based videoconferencing studios.

“The quality of sound and video is excellent, better than in a room,” Dr. El-Maraghi explained. *“Personal Videoconferencing is so easy to use, just point and click.”* He recalled attending a medical conference in Montreal, Quebec. From his laptop, he used Personal Videoconferencing to connect with his colleagues back in Ontario. Dr. El-Maraghi imagines a future in which OTN’s Personal Videoconferencing service will be available on tablets that can be used to conduct consults and meetings. In addition, the service allows him to visit his family in Ottawa, yet fulfill his responsibilities in Barrie.

“It is like I’m there in the room with the team.”



Advice to New Users:

Preparation is Key

His advice to new users of OTN's Personal Videoconferencing service—*"The service is simple to use. But you should make sure the system is up in advance of a meeting. And test the system in different places within the building in which you plan to use it in order to identify your strongest Wi-Fi connection."* He prefers to use a headset, rather than a speakerphone, because of the clarity of sound.

Dr. El-Maraghi is satisfied with the security of the service, because it is password protected and there is nothing stored on the hard drive. Because of the service's portability, he advised users to be aware of the need to protect the confidentiality of patient information. *"You do have to be in a quiet place...You must be aware that someone can peek over your shoulder and see the screen."*

The interview with Dr. El-Maraghi was conducted using OTN's secure Personal Videoconferencing service.



Dr. Robert El-Maraghi, B.Sc., M.D., FRCPC, Chief of Oncology, Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Centre, Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre, Chair, Community Oncologists of Metropolitan Toronto

Dr. El-Maraghi received his B.Sc. at Queen's University followed by his MD at the University of Ottawa, where he completed his Internal Medicine residency and Medical Oncology fellowship. Dr. El-Maraghi completed a Royal College accredited Investigational New Drug fellowship through the National Cancer Institute of Canada, IND group. He is the current Chair of the Community Oncologists of Metropolitan Toronto (COMET), a collaborative group of community Medical Oncologists and Hematologists in Ontario and also acts as Co-Chair of the COMET Education Committee and the Georgian Bay Oncology Group. Dr. El-Maraghi is an examiner for the Medical Council of Canada and holds an appointment of Clinical Lecturer at the University of Toronto.





Personal Videoconferencing for Your Health Care Practice

Personal Videoconferencing is secure, safe and reliable, and is subject to Ontario's Personal Health Information Act (PHIPA) and Canada's Person Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). The service is state-of-the-art with privacy protocols that meet or exceed provincial and federal standards.

Patients do not pay additional fees. Physicians may bill OHIP for telemedicine at a premium.

Training and support are provided to Personal Videoconferencing adopters. OTN is a recognized provider of healthcare distance education. That skill and experience are applied to all online Personal Videoconferencing training modules. Experienced OTN staff provide support to all users.

As the world leader in telemedicine, OTN helps Ontario get more out of the healthcare system, bridging the distance of time and geography to bring more patients the care they need, where and when they need it. Using innovative technology OTN streamlines the healthcare process, while also expanding the way knowledge is shared and how the medical community interacts with each other and with patients. The efficiencies achieved help healthcare budgets go farther. Funded by the Government of Ontario, OTN is a not-for-profit organization. For more information, go to www.otn.ca