

Case Study



Personal Videoconferencing turns distance into a matter of perspective.

The Challenge

Delivering health care to underserved patients in a populated area.

Dr. Dan Vouriot and his colleagues practice Addiction Medicine in the Erie St. Clair region of southwestern Ontario, which has a population in excess of 500,000. The infrastructure includes major highways, an international border crossing, regional airports, and passenger rail service. And yet, Dr. Vouriot explained, there are patients who are unable to travel to required follow-up appointments because of the absence of a public transportation system. He cited a patient in Wallaceburg, only 25 minutes away from a telemedicine studio in Chatham, who depended on the kindness of neighbours to get to Chatham for appointments. Missed appointments, therefore, were inevitable. The challenge for Dr. Vouriot and his colleagues was to make follow-up care accessible to every patient in the region, especially those with limited transportation options.

The Solution

Personal Videoconferencing, the cost effective solution to telemedicine

The satellite clinics in the region are staffed by a receptionist and a case manager. Dr. Vouriot and his colleagues visit the clinics in rotation, once or twice a week, on a regular schedule. The first satellite clinics were provisioned with a telemedicine studio. Installing a studio in a community as close to Chatham as Wallaceburg was cost prohibitive, until OTN introduced Personal Videoconferencing, a web-based service that allows the doctor and patient to see and speak to each other in real time. No expensive, television-style studio required, just a:

1. Laptop or desktop computer with an up-to-date computer operating system.
2. Business grade Internet connection.
3. HD webcam.
4. An echo-cancelling speakerphone or a headset.
5. OTN's clinical grade Personal Videoconferencing service.

The only thing missing from a Personal Videoconferencing consult, said Dr. Vouriot, is the ability to push a tissue box closer to a crying patient during an emotion-charged appointment.

"Personal Videoconferencing is good for low activity medicine."

Personal Videoconferencing is "great for talking to one another."

The Benefits

Accessibility

Dr. Vouriot believes the prime benefit of Personal Videoconferencing is the accessibility it grants to patients who need to develop therapeutic trust with their physician. Personal Videoconferencing mitigates the negative impact of external factors on the process, such as lack of transport.



Advice to new users:

Practice, practice, practice

When Dr. Vouriot and his colleagues first introduced Personal Videoconferencing to their practice, they spent time connecting back and forth. *“We did it in our practice. It was very helpful.”*

He also advises new users to practice connecting the speakerphone or headset and the webcam. He points out that the instructions available for new users were very useful during set up and practice.



The interview was conducted with Dr. Dan Vouriot using OTN's secure Personal Videoconferencing service.

Dr. Dan Vouriot, MD, FRCP(C)

Practicing since 1995, Dr. Vouriot spends 75% of his work week managing opioid addiction, during the remainder he covers ER and ICU in the Sarnia area. Telemedicine accounts for a quarter of the time he spends managing opioid addiction.





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 Personal 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 health care 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 health care budgets go farther. Funded by the Government of Ontario, OTN is a not-for-profit organization. For more information, go to www.otn.ca