



Improving Medical Care in Rural Kentucky

Polycom video helps Kentucky TeleCare Network provide equitable care throughout the state

The Kentucky TeleCare Network (KTHN) was founded in 1993 at the University of Kentucky with the goal of using video communications technology to help ensure rural Kentucky residents have access to medical specialty services that are not normally available in their local community. To accomplish this mission, KTHN deployed Polycom ViewStation® FX and VS4000™ video conferencing systems.

The challenge for the network is threefold: provide telemedicine, facilitate economic development and continue medical education components. KTHN uses Polycom video to offer medical specialty services to rural patients who are often unable to travel to visit a doctor. Video conferencing also keeps patients and their health care revenues in the local area, helping promote economic development for rural health care professionals and the entire community. And KTHN uses video to bring educational programs to rural health care professionals—reducing professional isolation and improving recruitment and retention of health care professionals at rural practices.

“Many rural Kentuckians lack the resources to travel outside their community for specialty health care services, and when they do, health care revenues also leave that rural community,” says Rob Sprang, co-project manager of the Kentucky TeleCare Network.

“We must provide rural Kentuckians with easy access to health care resources that are not normally available in their community, and keep more money in the local community to support their health care industry. ***The easy-to-manage Polycom ViewStation video conferencing systems extend the state’s ability to meet the medical needs of all its citizens.***” adds Sprang.

Remote Clinical Patient Visits

In the state of Kentucky, many rural patients do not have the financial resources or support systems to travel several hours to see a physician. KTHN’s 65 sites connect patients to an array of medical resources throughout the state via video conferencing, providing them with the care they need while eliminating financial or travel hardships.

Medical Personnel Collaboration and Education

The Kentucky TeleCare Network also allows physicians and other medical staff to communicate face-to-face and in real-time through interactive video conferencing. They can consult on difficult patient cases with members of the medical community throughout the state, the country and the world. In addition, the video conferencing network enables members of the medical community to keep their credentials current without the need to travel to classes.