



NEWS

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Saint Luke's expands telehealth program to correctional facilities in Missouri

Solution a 'win-win' for inmates and taxpayers

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Saint Luke's Health System's telehealth program has expanded through a partnership with Correctional Medical Services, Inc. (CMS), to provide medical care to prison and jail inmates in Missouri.

On Dec. 30, 2009, Saint Luke's Health System began providing pulmonary specialty care services to inmates at Crossroads Correctional Center in Cameron, Mo., and Jefferson City Correctional Center via telemedicine technology for CMS and the Missouri Department of Corrections (DOC).

Telemedicine uses electronic communication to link patients and doctors in remote locations via dedicated phone lines or the Internet. During the virtual office visit, both parties can see each other through TV-like monitors in their respective locations. The doctor can visually examine the patient using scopes and other electronic medical equipment – all from the convenience of a telehealth suite based on the Saint Luke's Hospital campus in Kansas City, Mo.

The program has the potential to expand with the addition of other specialty services currently provided by Saint Luke's Health System in Kansas and Missouri.

Correctional facilities benefit on many levels. "Telehealth provides an efficient solution for correctional patients with limited access to quality specialty care," said Steve Kropp, director of Outreach Services for Saint Luke's Health System. "It eliminates travel time and inmate transport costs while providing the health benefit of an office visit. Unnecessary emergency room visits and hospitalizations are reduced with enhanced medical care."

CMS Vice President of Operations Ralf J. Salke said, "These video encounters will reduce security risks associated with off-site trips for inmate patients, not to mention the savings related

to correctional officer time, fuel charges and the impact on state vehicles. This is a win-win for inmate patients and the taxpayers of Missouri.” Plans to expand the service are under way. According to Salke, 15 of the state’s 21 correctional centers are targeted for new telemedicine platforms with specialty services provided by Saint Luke’s Health System.

Tom Clements, Missouri Department of Corrections director of the Division of Adult Institutions emphasized, “Telehealth will improve our ability to safely and efficiently manage incarcerated offenders, while providing appropriate medical care to those who need it. The Department of Corrections is anxious to establish telehealth at additional correctional institutions.”

Saint Luke's Health System consists of 11 area hospitals and several primary and specialty care practices, and provides a range of inpatient, outpatient, and home care services. Founded as a faith-based, not-for-profit organization, our mission includes a commitment to the highest levels of excellence in health care and the advancement of medical research and education. The health system is an aligned organization in which the physicians and hospitals assume responsibility for enhancing the physical, mental, and spiritual health of people in the metropolitan Kansas City area and the surrounding region.

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