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Durham Virtual Urgent Care Clinic Improves Access and Patient Experience

Powered by Corolar Virtual Care, the innovative model uses a digital-first approach to deliver high-quality healthcare for every resident.

Durham Virtual Urgent Care Clinic Key Performance Indicators Referral to Test Date

3,628
virtual visits

26
minutes to triage (average)

88%
no further referral

38%
virtual visits that would have gone to ED

28%
video sessions

90+%
satisfaction

*data as of Nov. 30, 2021

Lakeridge Health is home to five hospitals and four emergency departments dedicated to caring for more than 650,000 people living and working in Durham Region. Speciality centres provide cancer treatments, mental health services, orthopedics, opthalmology and chronic kidney disease care.

The Challenge:

Lakeridge Health had been exploring virtual options to expand access to care for Durham Region residents when the pandemic hit in the spring of 2020. Virtual urgent care suddenly became a critical requirement to help hospitals quickly adapt to public health restrictions while maintaining a high level of care. The Durham Virtual Urgent Care Clinic had to become operational in a matter of months while meeting all jurisdictional, privacy and security requirements in Ontario. Two primary care clinics and several community partners would need to be integrated into the the launch.

The Requirements:

In designing their new virtual care model, the Lakeridge Health team set out to recreate the seamless transition from intake to consultation (nursing triage, physician) that patients experience in the hospital.

"We wanted to replicate the real-world, in-person care environment much more closely," says Dr. Ilan Lenga, Chief Information Officer and Chief Medical Information Officer at Lakeridge Health. That included enabling patients to meet with their primary care physician whenever possible—and even see multiple providers in a single session.

Adds Dr. Lenga, "The idea was to deliver the highest quality healthcare possible that just happened to be virtual."

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Why CVC for Virtual Care?

- No additional costs for audio and video using Microsoft Teams.
- Easy integration with commonly used EHR platforms for scheduled virtual visits.
- Enables urgent "walk-in" virtual care visits. Patient reminders and notifications help to reduce no-shows.
- Supports clinic and appointment-specific intake forms and notifications.
- Extensible to add more clinics and services with custom care pathways.

"Corolar Virtual Care allows you, with a quick visual, to see in the patient queue who is urgent, who is less urgent, and those patients waiting for primary care."

The Solution:

With the support of Ontario Health, Lakeridge Health selected Corolar Virtual Care (CVC) as its technology solution. CVC made it possible to operate the clinic securely and efficiently by running on Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Azure while integrating with the electronic health record (EHR) platform.

Customizable workflow options helped Lakeridge Health realize its design requirements. At the start of each virtual session, patients submit an intake form that is reviewed by a nurse in the emergency department. The nurse assesses the patient's suitability for the virtual clinic and performs a modified triage.

As patients wait for their appointments, they may leave the virtual lobby and return without losing their place in the queue. On-demand notifications are sent to patients via SMS, email or automated voice message with the start time for the appointment, reducing time loss and allowing consulting providers to seamlessly collaborate in a single session.

Dr. Larry Nijmeh, emergency care physician and ED lead for the Durham Virtual Urgent Care Clinic, finds CVC easy and practical to use. "It allows you, with a quick visual, to see in the patient queue who is urgent, who is less urgent, and those patients waiting for primary care."

Integrated Care Model

Expansion is already underway following the successful pilot program. The goal is to operate across the care continuum as one "clinic" with additional primary care partners and mental health services. A dedicated nurse will be assigned to each clinic to assess whether a patient is most appropriate for a primary care or emergency physician based on the clinical need, optimizing resources and improving the patient experience by matching each person with the right level of care.

Learn more about Corolar Virtual Care:
calian.com/solutions/virtual-care-solutions/

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