

UnitedHealth Group's Connected Care Telehealth Initiative: Connecting People to a World of Care



UnitedHealth Group®

Overview

UnitedHealth Group and Cisco are partnering to build the first national telehealth network, which will give patients access to physicians and specialists when in-person visits are not possible. "Connected Care" is the "house call of the 21st century," combining advanced technology and health resources to greatly expand physicians' reach in rural, urban and other underserved areas. Connected Care uses advanced video, audio, medical devices and health information technology to create an experience remarkably similar to an in-person visit with a doctor.

Connected Care clinics will be available in the workplace, as well as in rural and retail locations. In-home telehealth visits using similar technology will also be introduced to truly bring care to the patient.

The program draws on UnitedHealth Group's national reach, broad care provider network and deep experience in merging technology with clinical expertise, along with Cisco's industry-leading video conferencing and other collaborative network technologies. Together, these elements will give Connected Care the broad scale that other telehealth programs have not achieved.

Purpose

Create an integrated system designed to connect patients with physicians when in-person visits aren't possible, making it easier for all Americans to have access to health care – no matter where they live or work.

The "House Call" of the 21st Century

Connected Care will go beyond typical telemedicine programs. It will:

- Create a patient-physician interaction that is remarkably similar to an in-person visit with the doctor;
- Enable real-time simultaneous connectivity among multiple people, including physicians, patients and nurses;
- Build a health information exchange that ensures the continuity of patient and other clinical information between patient and doctor and among care providers;
- Bring doctors face-to-face with other doctors for clinical consultations on specific cases;
- Pair local and national health care resources that can be available to all individuals; and
- Enable doctors, nurses, researchers and health system professionals across the country to connect in real time for clinical education sessions, health and research information exchanges, and decision support on clinical and administrative issues.

Technological Capabilities

The program is the first to integrate industry-leading technologies to deliver the most advanced telehealth experience using:

- Cisco's HealthPresence high-definition video conferencing;
- Sophisticated medical devices designed for remote use, ranging from a high-definition exam camera and smart digital stethoscope to a retinal camera and dermascope;
- Integration and sharing of health information to enable better coordination of care through Electronic Health Records and other Health IT;
- Telecommunications technology including satellite and broadband providers;

- UnitedHealth Group Connected Care mobile clinic – an 18-wheel demonstration clinic showcasing the technology and connectivity available through the telehealth network; and
- Claims processing platforms.

Key Patient Services Offered

- Wellness programs for patients to stay healthy;
- Acute care for the ill;
- Follow-up examinations for those being treated; and
- Treatment of a wide variety of conditions, ranging from common ailments like colds, flu, fevers and allergies, to more chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, that require specialist attention.

Key Benefits to Patients

- Enables patients to obtain quicker, easier access to health care – especially in remote or other underserved areas – with the opportunity for immediate diagnosis and feedback;
- Helps reduce expensive trips to the ER or long trips to see a specialist by providing an option for immediate care closer to home; and
- Decreases the time and sometimes inconvenience associated with a traditional doctor’s office visit by providing alternative locations such as at worksites or in retail locations.

Key Benefits to Physicians

- Can increase efficiencies and reach of physicians’ medical practices;
- Extends primary and specialty care practices to underserved populations and broadens the geographic reach of subspecialty practices at academic teaching centers and tertiary care facilities; and
- Provides continuity of patients’ health information by sharing any data or clinical information obtained during telehealth visits with physicians using EHR platforms and other technologies.

Key Benefits to Employers

- *Healthier workforce, lower costs:* Increased access to preventive care and health education for their employees, helping avoid conditions that can lead to absences and costly treatments; and
- *Higher productivity:* Reduces or eliminates the need for employees to take time off from work to travel long distances to receive specialized care.

Telehealth Market

The North American telemedicine market is expected to grow 46 percent over the next five years to more than \$6 billion by 2012 from \$900 million in 2007, according to a Datamonitor report from research and consulting firm Frost & Sullivan.

For more information, please visit www.ConnectedCareAmerica.com. You may also follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/connectingcare or visit us on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/connectingcare