

# COVID Crisis and Surge Planning: The New Modality

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- The COVID-19 pandemic caused a **rapid adoption of telemedicine** throughout the US with an increase noted by many health systems, particularly in ambulatory visits. Many health systems struggled to find inpatient beds for the volume of patients presenting needing care.
- Layering telemedicine into each step of the incident command's COVID disaster plan **allowed for workforce multipliers** to care for the tidal wave coming.
- **Telemedicine will remain a critical part** of health care delivery strategy as we learn to live in a world where pandemics/epidemics may be more common

## Where We Were

- Over 25 years of successful innovation and leading virtual care delivery
- Building a continuum of specialty services: Emergency, ICU, Pharmacy, Senior Care, Correctional Health, School Health, Behavioral Health, & Hospitalist

## Where We Are

- Providing COVID response solutions for customers based on need
- Expedited delivery of mobile equipment to allow telehealth video endpoints to conserve PPE and staff exposure

## Where We Want to Go

- Harnessing and Managing
- New value and exposure to the importance of telehealth
- Benefits from crisis management that turn into long term solutions

**LET'S WORK TOGETHER.**

# COVID-19 Situation

## What We Experienced:

- Bad Information
- Lack of Knowledge
- News “Reals” of New York, France
- Public Fear
- Provider Fear
- Public Accounts of Death Tolls
- Closures
- **PANIC**



# Health System COVID-19 Response

## Health System Shut Down

- Brick and Mortar Clinic
- Elective Surgical Cases
- PPE Conservation
- Incident Command
- Transfer Plans
- Supply Accounts – Vents/PPE



## Telemedicine Lights Up

- Register 900-1000 Providers on telehealth platforms
- Move from 50 TM calls/day to up to 2000/day
- Monitor and support patients in their home to reduce exposures
- Support SNF in reduction of exposure to residents

We were in a fortunate position that we already had programs in place and were able to quickly deploy crisis and surge services such as iPad technology, RT services and staffing.





## COVID-19 Response

**Our COVID Response:** Wake up call to learn how quickly we can provide scope/scale of telehealth

- Converted Ask-A-Nurse hotline into COVID Call Center
- Created drive-through testing centers
- With clinics closed, trained hundreds of physicians and specialists in virtual care visits
- Virtual visits help conserve PPE and reduce exposure
- Deployed mobile equipment to enable virtual visits for sites
- Isolation wings created in long-term care facilities

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# Example of Improved Access/Outcome

- AveraNow Virtual Visit platform:
  - **1,000 trained** providers
  - The system had **16,182 visits** in one month during COVID
  - Launched the capability to follow up with all Avera patients @Home with RPM devices
    - Prenatal Care-Fetal Heart Monitors
    - Palliative Care Support
    - Positive COVID patient – Daily Check-Ins
    - Behavioral Health Assessment
      - Depression, Anxiety and Domestic Abuse



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- IT Platforms and Use of iPads
  - Deployed over 350 iPads and other technology such as headsets, webcams, peripherals, carts
- Innovation Team supported launch and stabilization efforts of virtual visit platform
  - Stood up a call center took over 2500 calls (over 6 weeks) from patients and providers

# Future: What We're Hearing

Hospitals are continuing to be challenged with staffing.

State funded/allocated staffing support helped – in order to keep that momentum, telemedicine needs to be part of our strategy.

Hospitals considering staffing alternatives incorporating telemedicine as it becomes the new norm.

Some rural hospitals who didn't perform surgeries before COVID actually had a lucrative year with higher census, LOS and acuity.

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For nearly a decade, the US has been facing a critical nursing shortage

Over **1 million** new registered nurses will be needed by **2030** to meet healthcare demands

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics projects **175,900** openings for RNs every year until **2029**

Source: Healthline

# Nursing Shortage

## Understanding the American Nursing Shortage

[Facts and stats](#) | [Locations](#) | [Causes](#) | [Effects](#) | [Solutions](#) | [Takeaway](#)



The New York Times

### ***‘Nursing Is in Crisis’: Staff Shortages Put Patients at Risk***

“When hospitals are understaffed, people die,” one expert warned as the U.S. health systems reach a breaking point in the face of the Delta variant.



The future of  
telemedicine is bright