



Virtual Urgent Care – conveniently connecting patients and medical providers for non-emergent video visits with full EHR integration

Lucille Fenelon¹, Rose Ann Alfaro¹, Dawn Marta Feldthouse¹, Allan Michael Flores¹, Vanesa Flaviano¹, Veronica Gragnano¹, Deborah Jacques¹, Jason Sherwin¹, Rachelle Torres¹

NYU Langone Health - Medical Center Information Technology - Clinical System & Clinical Transformation



INTRODUCTION

New York University (NYU) Langone Health partnered with Epic to leverage existing integration with the Vido video platform to build the NYU Langone Virtual Urgent Care (VUC). Integrating directly with Epic allows patients and providers to use Epic as the single enterprise Electronic Health Record (EHR) for all in-person and telemedicine encounters. This approach of leveraging synchronous and asynchronous landscapes streamlines the communication platform amongst all providers within the enterprise, and is a highly sought after methodology by many health systems as their telemedicine strategies evolve.

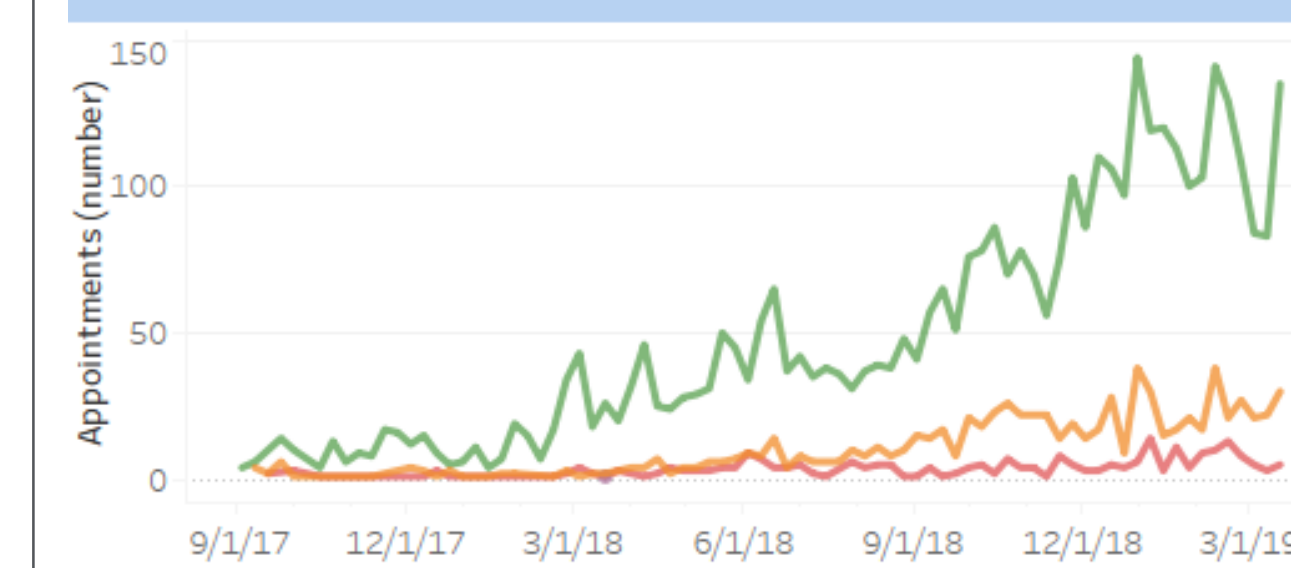
METHOD

We designed and developed an integrated scheduling and online check-in experience for our Virtual Urgent Care patients of which they were able to access on the hardware of their choice. Patients could then connect with an NYU Langone doctor through our integrated video platform. The provider can access the patient's full medical history in Epic and conduct the clinical encounter. After the visit, the provider can document a progress note and enter follow up orders such as labs, prescriptions, and imaging. The patient is able to complete their visit with a short survey sharing their experience with the VUC team.

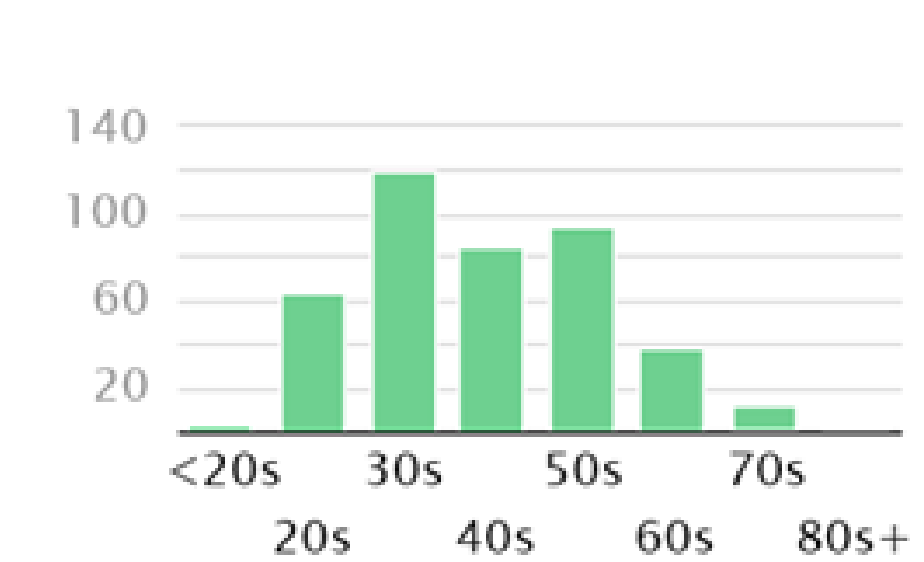
The service is available to millions of patients in the tri-state area, and commercial insurance is accepted for Aetna, Cigna, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and UnitedHealthcare patients. Real-time eligibility is used for immediate insurance verification, eliminating the need for front-end registration staff and facilitating proper co-pay collection while the remaining balance is billed to insurance.

Demographics

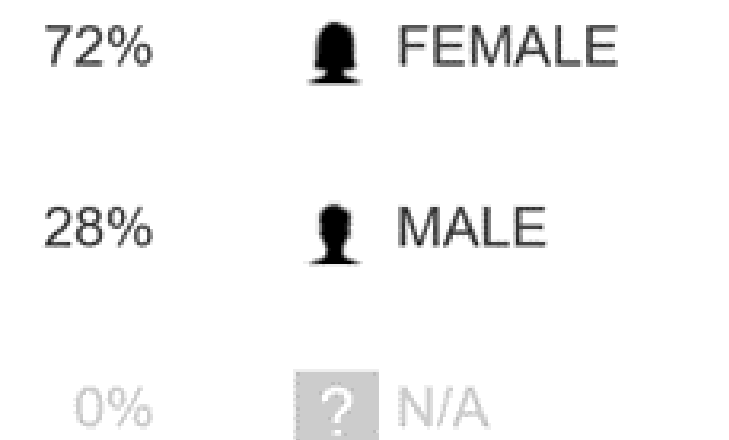
VUC Visits Over Time



AGE BREAKDOWN



GENDER



PURPOSE

Patients often seek immediate access to medical providers for non-emergent care. Prior to VUC, patients seeking non-emergent care would be forced to physically visit a doctor's office, an urgent care center or even an emergency department. The above mentioned predisposes a patient to possible spread of infection added avoidable inconvenience such as wasted travel time, and higher co-payments.

Additionally, NYU Langone's executive leadership was interested in leveraging technology to treat minor medical conditions via telemedicine rather than investing in brick-and-mortar urgent care centers. Health system leadership tasked the IT department and Emergency Department (ED) operations to design, implement, and support a Virtual Urgent Care that would advance the way we offer healthcare services here at NYU Health (PR Newswire, 2018).

RESULTS

We measured the effectiveness and relevance of the VUC service and technology using Key Performance Indicators such as clinical volume, operational efficiency, and patient satisfaction. A review of the VUC dashboards and analytics was performed to explore the voice of the consumer regarding: (1) ease-of-use, (2) perceived usefulness, (3) overall patient satisfaction and (4) benefits to key stakeholders.

The data shows that VUC is convenient, cost effective and promotes health seeking behavior. Since launching in September 2017, VUC has serviced 3,490 patients. Patients can be treated if they are located in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania at the time of their visit. Patients who were treated ranged from as young as 12 years old to as old as 97.

Overall, feedback from surveyed patients demonstrated a service quality rating of 4.6 out of 5. The majority of patients share that; (1) they are likely to use Virtual Urgent Care again, (2) the technology was fairly easy to use, (3) their medical needs were well managed, and (4) that they were satisfied with their visit. When asked what they like about the service, patients highlight convenience and access to NYU Langone's world-class providers.

CONCLUSIONS

With the advent of Virtual Urgent Care, patients no longer need to leave the comfort of their home or experience long wait times in an ED or urgent care center. The significance of VUC is evident among a broad range of stakeholders including patients, their employers, Health Care Organizations (HCO) and third-party payers. These key stakeholders are all beneficiaries of the cost savings and conveniences afforded by this alternative method of health care service. The proliferation of Health Information Technology (HIT) and the market saturation of mobile devices have helped expand the reach of real-time virtual healthcare video consultation. Virtual Urgent Care promotes patient engagement, efficiency and quality care. It is projected that as value-based care continues to grow, telehealth will follow in tandem (Wider, 2018).

REFERENCES

PR Newswire. (2018). NYU Langone Health's Virtual Urgent Care Brings World Class Doctors to Patients on Mobile Devices. *PR Newswire US*.
Wider, J. (2018). Telehealth impacts ROI, patient safety. *Health Management Technology*, 39(2), 6–11.