

WakeMed Health & Hospitals: Expanding Pediatric Neurology Coverage through Telemedicine

The Need: Ensuring Continuous Pediatric Neurology Care Amid Changing Provider Availability

WakeMed Health & Hospitals, based in Raleigh, North Carolina, is a comprehensive health system that includes the region's only dedicated Children's Emergency Department, a Level 4 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), and an inpatient pediatric unit and an inpatient physical rehabilitation unit. As a leading provider of pediatric care, WakeMed faced a significant challenge when their long-standing partner, a local neurology group, decided to shift its focus entirely to outpatient care, leaving WakeMed without inpatient pediatric neurology coverage.

The hospital considered recruiting their own in-house pediatric neurologists, but due to the need to provide comprehensive 24/7 coverage the cost to employ providers based on the existing volume was not financially sound. Instead, WakeMed opted to engage in telemedicine driven by the need to maintain continuous, high-quality care for pediatric patients, especially those requiring specialized neurological services.

The Challenge: Overcoming Skepticism and Ensuring Seamless Integration

Introducing telemedicine as a new model of care within the pediatric population came with its own set of challenges. There was initial hesitancy from both the medical staff and the families, as the concept of remote consultations was new.

"There was certainly a thought that more often than not, parents of pediatric patients would want a face-to-face conversation with the provider about what was going on with their child," said Jeff Langdon, Executive Director, Women & Children's Services, WakeMed Health & Hospitals.



Ensures **continuous access** to pediatric neurology expertise, 24/7.



Keeps pediatric patients **in-house**, reducing the need for transfers to other facilities.



Allows families to receive **expert neurological care** for their children close to home.



Despite the concerns, WakeMed recognized the importance of finding a sustainable solution that would allow them to keep pediatric patients in-house rather than transferring them to other facilities. “We needed to look at alternative otherwise we would have to transfer those patients needing a neurology consult to another organization, even though we are able to provide any other service they may need,” Langdon explained.

The Solution: Partnering with Eagle Telemedicine for Pediatric Neurology Coverage

In April 2024, WakeMed began its partnership with Eagle Telemedicine, focusing on providing 24/7 pediatric neurology coverage. This collaboration introduced two board-certified pediatric neurologists who became an integral part of the WakeMed medical team, despite being remotely located.

“The providers were credentialed as members of our medical staff and serve as a part of our medical team, not just viewed as a third-party group. This made a big difference in how they were perceived and integrated,” Langdon noted.

The implementation process was smooth, with Eagle’s familiarity with WakeMed’s electronic medical record system, Epic, playing a crucial role. “The fact that the providers were already familiar with Epic was a huge benefit. It greatly reduced the work required, the onboarding time, and improved the efficiency of collaboration,” Langdon said.

The Impact: Partnering with Eagle Telemedicine for Pediatric Neurology Coverage

The partnership with Eagle Telemedicine has had a positive impact on patient care and provider satisfaction at WakeMed. The introduction of 24/7 access to pediatric neurology expertise has been invaluable, particularly for the Children’s Emergency Department, NICU, PICU, and inpatient pediatric unit.

“It was truly the first time we had readily available access 24/7. Our providers could expect a phone call right away when they needed guidance or support around managing patient care or modifying medications,” Langdon remarked.

This access to specialized care has also helped reduce the need for patient transfers, allowing families to keep their children close to home while receiving expert care. “By mitigating the transfer, providing incredible care

WakeMed Health & Hospitals

Raleigh, North Carolina

WakeMed Health & Hospitals is a 1,003-bed comprehensive health system offering specialized pediatric services, including the region’s only dedicated Children’s Emergency Department, Level 4 NICU, PICU, inpatient pediatric care, pediatric physical rehabilitation and a comprehensive range of pediatric specialists and subspecialists.

Use Case

Provide continuous pediatric neurology coverage filling a void in inpatient neurology coverage.

Eagle Telemedicine Benefits

- 24/7 access to board-certified pediatric neurologists
- Improved provider confidence with specialty consults as needed
- Enhanced patient care without the potential need for transfers
- Seamless integration with existing EMR (Epic)



here, the patient doesn't have to go anywhere else. They can stay with us in their local community, and their family can feel comfortable and confident that they're receiving the highest quality care," Langdon emphasized.

The success of the pediatric neurology telemedicine program has led WakeMed to consider expanding the service across its entire system, including other emergency departments and their stand-alone emergency departments. "Our emergency physicians began to realize the benefit associated with it and requested to have access to this across our system," Langdon added.

"The confidence that Eagle Telemedicine gives our providers expert, subspecialty-specific support has been of significant value. It has meaningfully enhanced the overall care our pediatric patients receive."

— Jeff Langdon, Executive Director, Women & Children's Services, WakeMed Health & Hospitals

Result

WakeMed's collaboration with Eagle Telemedicine has successfully addressed the critical need for continuous pediatric neurology coverage, ensuring that patients receive the specialized care they need without delays or potential disruption of transfers. The positive reception from both providers and patients underscores the value of telemedicine in enhancing care delivery within pediatric settings.

To explore how Eagle Telemedicine can support your hospital's specialty care needs,
visit: <https://www.eagletelemedicine.com>.