

Logan County Health Services: Increasing Rural Access to Endocrinology, Rheumatology, and Nephrology via Telemedicine

The Need: Addressing Gaps in Specialty Care in Rural Kansas

Logan County Health Services, a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital in Kansas, serves a widely dispersed rural population where accessing specialized medical care can be difficult. Patients often had to travel hours to receive endocrinology, rheumatology, and nephrology services, making it harder for them to get consistent care. Recruiting full-time specialists to a small rural hospital was financially impossible, creating a gap in care for local residents.

“We were trying to get more specialty services in here,” said Aimee Zimmerman, CEO at Logan County Health Services. “We needed a model that could provide access to critical specialties without the high costs associated with recruiting full-time specialists.”

The Challenge: Meeting Specialty Care Needs with Limited Resources

Despite the need, Logan County faced numerous challenges in bringing specialty care to the community. The hospital couldn't afford to hire full-time specialists, nor did it have the patient volume to justify that investment. Additionally, geographic isolation made it difficult for patients to access specialists in nearby cities, often leading to delayed care.

Furthermore, evaluating telemedicine options was challenging as the small hospital wasn't able to commit to enough clinical hours for most traditional telemedicine providers. This made augmenting staff physicians with telemedicine largely out-of-reach – until Zimmerman discovered the Eagle Rural Care Alliance program. This program offers access to telemedicine programs by bundling multiple hospitals' needs together to lower the access cost and increase care access without the overhead barrier.



Provides **continuous access** to endocrinology, rheumatology, and nephrology care.



Keeps patients local, eliminating the need for long-distance travel to larger medical facilities.



Utilizing existing technology, **reduces upfront costs** and improves ease of care coordination.



The Solution: Partnering with Eagle Telemedicine to Provide Specialty Care

Logan County Health Services partnered with Eagle Telemedicine to address their challenges, sharing a program with other rural hospitals with similar needs. Together the hospitals have united to combine their needs into one program. This gave Logan County the telemedicine access they needed to endocrinology, rheumatology, and nephrology. “The onboarding process was really great,” Zimmerman said. “We were allowed to use our own technology, which helped minimize upfront costs.”

By sharing specialists with other rural facilities in the region, Logan County was able to achieve a sustainable model for specialty care, having engaged more than 50 specialty consults since implementation that they would otherwise not have been able to support. “We tried to choose specialties where we had a clear patient need, so patients would see the value in receiving services locally,” Zimmerman noted.

By choosing specialties that could drive revenue through lab and imaging orders, the hospital was also able to offset some of the costs associated with telemedicine services. As Zimmerman put it, “Patients don’t have to leave for those services, and they can get all of their care right here.”

The Impact: Improved Patient Satisfaction and Access to Care

Since launching the telemedicine services, Logan County has seen positive results from both patients and providers. Patients who had previously traveled long distances for care now receive treatment locally and feel they are getting more in-depth consultations.

“One patient who had been traveling elsewhere for endocrinology said they learned more in one telemedicine visit than they had in years of going to another provider,” Zimmerman shared. The program’s success has extended to other specialties as well, with rheumatology and nephrology services helping to keep patients closer to home for all their healthcare needs.

"The providers we've worked with through Eagle have been fantastic, and patients feel they're getting more thorough care than they've experienced elsewhere."

— Aimee Zimmerman, CEO, Logan County Health Services

Logan County Health Services

Kansas

Logan County Health Services is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital serving a rural population. It provides vital healthcare services, including access to specialty care via telemedicine

Use Case

Provide endocrinology, rheumatology, and nephrology care to rural patients.

Eagle Telemedicine Benefits

- Delivered more than 50 specialty consults that otherwise couldn't be supported
- Rural Care Alliance program enables specialty access in small hourly increments
- Delivers patient access to specialty care without long-distance travel
- Use of existing technology reduces upfront costs
- Improved patient satisfaction and provider relationships
- Increased revenue for labs and imaging services while reducing patient transfers

The Result

Logan County Health Services' partnership with Eagle Telemedicine has provided local patients with much-needed access to specialty care, significantly improving their healthcare experience while keeping them closer to home.

Discover more about the Eagle Rural Care Alliance here:

<https://www.eagletelemedicine.com/eagle-rural-care-alliance>