Schumacher Group Launches Telehospitalist Program

First group in state to offer real-time, acute care HM telemedicine

LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

Schumacher Group (SG) Hospital Medicine clients Abrom Kaplan Memorial Hospital and Acadia General Hospital, both part of the [Lafayette General Health](#) system in Lafayette, LA, have recently launched a new Telehospitalist Program.

The program is the first of its kind in the area in which physicians provide care overnight from a remote site - SG's Telemedicine Service Center at their corporate office in Lafayette.

"We all know that the healthcare industry must deliver accessible, available and affordable patient care, no matter the size or location of a hospital facility," explains **SG Director of Provider Recruiting for EM and HM John Giglione.** "We were determined to make the difference in the industry by offering our hospital partners a unique and innovative opportunity, allowing them to close this sometimes difficult gap."

SG Vice President of Clinical Strategy Dianne Bowers, RN, MSN, APRN, explains further the impetus for the development of the program, which launched on Oct. 1. "As we looked forward into what's next in health care, we considered different ways to improve the quality of patient care and provide greater access to care. We recognized that smaller to medium volume community hospitals needed specialty care — hospital medicine specifically."

Physicians involved in the Telehospitalist Program are taking care of patients through a secure, on-site robot at the hospital, whose actions are controlled by the physician located at SG. A nurse accompanies the robot, which contains a precise camera system used to view and diagnose a patient. With this highly magnified view, the doctor is virtually extending their eyes and hands to the patient.

"Using the two auxiliary monitors, the telehospitalist can get into a patient's chart, CT, or, MRI, pull up labs and medical records, and make any changes he deems necessary," **Bowers** continued. "He has immediate access to everything that would be available onsite."

Dr. Randy Pilgrim, SG's enterprise chief medical officer, explains that with recent changes in state regulations, coordinated with the help of their advocacy team, physicians can now prescribe pain medication and necessary controlled medications through this service, if appropriate for the patient's medical condition.

"When our team visited with the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners, we provided suggestions that would advance the same standard of care for patients being seen by a Telehospitalist, compared to patients being seen in a traditional setting, and the Board graciously agreed," explained **Dr. Pilgrim.** "This resolution is a great example of a partnership and mutual advocacy in support of innovation in patient care."

For both Abrom Kaplan Memorial Hospital and Acadia General, having a Telehospitalist Program means life-changing advantages for patients.

"Telemedicine is more than just technology," **Giglione** added. "We feel it's the future of

health care services to use collaboration and teamwork through remote support. We're continuing our mission of putting patients first by giving them access to the level of care they deserve."

For more information about the Telehospitalist Program, read a [recent post](#) from SG's Healthcare Insights and a [message from CEO, Rich D'Amaro](#).

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