

IVeH Launches the Albanian Telemedicine and E-Health Program, Based on the Polycom[®] RealPresence[®] Platform

Industry

Healthcare/Education

Daily use

- Patient care and consultations
- Distant education
- Prevention and wellness
- Internal communications
- Multi disciplinary team collaboration

Solution

IVeH delivers an advanced e-health programme in Albania, powered by the Polycom[®] RealPresence[®] Platform.

Results and benefits

- Improved patient care
- Improved communications between health centers and hospitals
- Increase productivity of healthcare professionals
- Bring professional health care to rural area
- Effectively educate hospital staff

Overview

The International Virtual e-Hospital (IVeH) Foundation is a non-profit organization created to assist in rebuilding the public healthcare system in developing countries by introducing and implementing telemedicine, telehealth, and virtual educational programs. IVeH is managed solely by its volunteers and governed by an international Board of Directors. Their objective is to train and educate healthcare providers of developing countries in the use and implementation of telemedicine, e-health and electronic libraries. After their incredible success in Kosova, they implemented a second program in Albania which officially launched in September 2011.

The IVeH built the National Telemedicine Center as part of the Integrated Telemedicine and e-Health programme of Albania, in partnership with USAID, the Albanian Ministry of Health, the United States Department of Defense, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The program is mostly funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The network consists of a National Telemedicine Center in the capitals of both Prishtina and Tirana, headquarters at the Mother Theresa Hospital, regional Telemedicine Centers in Shkoder, Durresi, Vlora and Korqa, three other hospitals plus the Regional Autistic Center of Albania. The Albania foundation of the national telemedicine and e-health network addresses the issue of rural access to patients care along with medical education for health professionals.

From conception to delivery

The Albania Telemedicine Program is modeled on the existing and successful program in the Republic of Kosova. Led by professor Rifat Latifi, founder of the IVeH, it was developed and operational within two years. For IVeH, it was easy to utilize the trusted partners which helped make the Kosova program successful and therefore the Polycom[®] RealPresence[®] Platform as the collaboration solution, and the central element of the project. The IVeH requirements were specific as they needed to collaborate and hold video meetings within their network, and most importantly with hospitals and healthcare professionals outside of their network, all over the world. Professor Latifi explains their choice of the Polycom RealPresence Platform, "The Polycom RealPresence Platform delivers the flexible architectural design and infrastructure which is vital to our project. We need a solution that is simple to manage, and interoperability is crucial."

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The Polycom RealPresence platform

For this project, the platform is composed of the Polycom® RealPresence® Collaboration Server, the Polycom® RealPresence® Resource Manager, the Polycom® RealPresence® Virtualization Manager™, the Polycom® RSS™, Polycom® Video Border Proxy™ (VBP®), and several Polycom® HDX® room telepresence solutions. The endpoints are located in telemedicine centers, hospitals, the center for Autism and health centers throughout the country.

Main functions of the Polycom platform for IVEH

The Polycom RealPresence platform has 3 main purposes. The first being remote medical care. Many departments of the Tirana University Hospital center ‘Mother Theresa’ are using the telemedicine network to consult with partner hospitals in different countries in Europe and the USA. Health professionals are also able to examine patients in any other telemedicine centers in Albania and Kosovo, giving patients from all over the country access to experts.

The second is the Electronic Library. The telemedicine center is equipped with 20 computers and has access to the World Health Organisation database HINARI (Health Inter Network Access to Research Initiative). It allows full text access to a large number of scientific journals, books and live surgery recordings.

The third is the Distance Medical Education. This continuous program is one of the most important components of the Integrated Telemedicine and e-Health Program of Albania. It consists of lectures, seminars, conferences, workshops and other education events organized nationally and regionally which are transmitted via the Polycom RealPresence Platform to all the centers facilitating and increasing knowledge sharing.

Beyond these 3 main functions, the platform is also supporting prevention and wellness, by bringing medical care to rural and remote locations. The solutions also allow for multi-disciplinary team meetings, between medical staff, local government authorities, and other key—project individuals.

Initiate-Build-Operate-Transfer

Professor Latifi’s project is based on his IBOT strategy: Initiate, Build, Operate, and Transfer. The first phase of the project includes the establishment of basic infrastructure, infrastructure, policies and procedures. Training and education is an imperative component of the program, and is accomplished using the Polycom platform.

Professor Latifi confirms “The most important part of the program is the continuous education of the local health professionals to keep them autonomous, the best way to do this is with the Polycom RealPresence platform.” The priority for the Albania project is to implement innovative ways for expanding the distance medical care program for different medical disciplines.

Future plans for the IVEH

The IVEH is in the process of implementing national telemedicine programs in Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Gaza, Palestine, Cape Verde, Tanzania, Nigeria and Southeast Asia. Each of these programs have been established and/or are supported by Ministries of Health and/or organizations that play key roles in their regions in both healthcare and education and funded by different donors.

IVEH has been rewarded with the Computerworld Honors Programs, “21st Century Achievement Award.” Computerworld Honors Program recognizes the organization which creates and uses information technology to promote and advance the public welfare, benefit society and change the world for the better. IVEH does just that, and continues one country at a time. The motivation for the award was the elaboration of the IBOT strategy and its successful implementation in Kosovo and Albania. Then, in December 2011, URAC (originally known as the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission) and the Care Continuum Alliance awarded to the IVEH, in recognition of its IBOT strategy, the 2011 “International Health Promotion Award” in the International Community Health category. Most recently, the IVEH and the seven telemedicine centers in Kosovo received the 2011 “Visual Communications User Application Healthcare Award” at the Telepresence and Video Conferencing Editor’s Choice Awards ceremony.

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Professor Rifat Latifi, Founder of IVeH

Learn more

To find out how Polycom solutions can help your organization, visit us at www.polycom.com or speak with a Polycom Account Representative.

Product listing

Telepresence and video conferencing

- Polycom® HDX® 7000
- Polycom® HDX® 6000
- Polycom® HDX® 8000

Infrastructure

- Polycom® RealPresence® Collaborations Server (formerly known as Polycom® RMX® 2000)
- Polycom® RealPresence® Resource Manager
- Polycom® Video Broder Proxy™ (VBP®)
- Polycom® RSS™ 4000

About Polycom

Polycom is the global leader in open standards-based unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) solutions for voice and video collaboration, trusted by more than 415,000 customers around the world. Polycom solutions are powered by the Polycom® RealPresence® Platform, comprehensive software infrastructure and rich APIs that interoperate with the broadest set of communication, business, mobile and cloud applications and devices to deliver secure face-to-face video collaboration in any environment.

Polycom, Inc.
1.800.POLYCOM
www.polycom.com

Polycom Asia Pacific Pte Ltd
+65 6389 9200
www.polycom.asia

Polycom EMEA
+44 (0)1753 723282
www.polycom.co.uk

