



Healthcare

Daily Use

- Telemedicine consultations and full medical services

Solution

- Polycom's flagship HDX and VSX® group video conferencing solutions
- Polycom MGC™ conferencing bridges

Results and Benefits

- Increases access to healthcare for place-bound patients medical outcomes
- Minimizes time away from office for doctor visits and fewer sick days, resulting in improved productivity
- Provides accurate in-place diagnoses and on-site medical evaluations, resulting in significant cost savings for corporations

Healthcare Services Independent of Time and Location with NuPhysicia

Background

NuPhysicia, LLC is a telemedicine services company at the forefront of changing the model for healthcare delivery in the United States and around the world. Company President, Dr. Glenn Hammack, believes healthcare can be improved significantly through the use of visual communications technology – video telemedicine.

“Almost everybody today acknowledges that healthcare, globally, is facing a challenge, and that challenge is two-fold,” explains Hammack. “On the one hand, there are not enough doctors, and on the other hand, specialized skills are needed and they are not always available where they need to be.”

That's where NuPhysicia comes in with its goal of breaking down the barriers that hinder access to care, namely time and place. NuPhysicia is a privately held Houston company that evolved out of years of telemedicine research at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). As a principal member of UTMB's telemedicine program, Hammack was led UTMB's programs for the best use of telemedicine technology which led, ultimately, to the introduction of ground-breaking new products and services. Much more than a packaged technology solution, NuPhysicia's offerings join medical professionals and the latest technology to bring fully integrated healthcare services to patients.

NuPhysicia serves two major markets with separate brands: InPlace Medical Solutions™ for remote, offshore and harsh environment health; and Medicine At Work™ for on-site employee health programs. Using Polycom video conferencing solutions integrated with advanced medical peripherals, NuPhysicia connects remotely located patients directly with doctors for the provision of medical examinations and fully prescriptive health services.

Care When and Where it's Needed

InPlace Medical Services is an outstanding new service for medical treatment in remote, offshore and harsh environments – it is a complete solution with all staffing, technology, and supplies. Hammack describes the program's origins from the University's program in Antarctica. “In a contract with Raytheon Polar Services, UTMB provides telemedicine services to the nearly 3,100 people currently stationed there. While there are primary care physicians on location, the advanced video telemedicine service makes available specialized

“Polycom's video conferencing solutions are at the core of our business. They are so simple to use, with such intuitive user interfaces, it allows us to focus on recruiting the best physicians, instead of recruiting technologists.”

Dr. Oscar Boultinghouse, Senior Vice President, NuPhysicia

consultations and advice for issues that are outside primary care. This is vital, since aircraft cannot fly to the bases for months out of the year, even for medical evacuations.”

In more dramatic instances, video telemedicine provides an important new tool for better managing emergency situations offshore. Recently, on an offshore oil production platform, a welder was injured by a piece of molten metal that lodged in his ear canal. Because the on-deck paramedic wasn't equipped to assess the injury, this situation would typically require the welder to be evacuated for emergency care. At night, such an unscheduled evacuation would cost the employer more than \$30,000. But with the live video telemedicine setup combined with medical peripheral devices, the doctor was able to directly examine the ear canal and determine that the burn was minor, not on the eardrum, and applied appropriate treatment on the spot. The welder was managed without the need for a costly evacuation.

Healthy Workforce Boosts Productivity, Saves Money

NuPhysicia's "Medicine at Work" solution is an on-site employee health program that provides clinics right at employer locations at a fraction of the cost of regular on-site clinics. Equipped with video telemedicine and staffed full-time with a paramedic who has telemedicine expertise, the clinics provide doctor examinations for every patient. Visits are available on a walk-in basis or by schedule to everyone in the workplace. Services range from simple coughs and colds to complete health assessments and reviews, all provided over the video telemedicine link. Prescriptions are written when needed, and the programs coordinate with the employer's regular insurance and with the employee's regular doctors.

Dr. Hammack sees this as a real opportunity for companies to save money, improve productivity, and differentiate themselves in a way that enhances employee recruitment and retention.

"If an employer has enough employees in one location," says Hammack, "video telemedicine offers the ability to intercept a lot of situations, for a flat monthly fee, so insurance rates are less likely to rise due to increased claims activity." In addition, onsite healthcare focused on prevention can reduce the amount of time employees spend away from the office at medical appointments, reduce sick leave utilization, and improve productivity, which can favorably affect the bottom line.

One of NuPhysicia's Medicine At Work™ customers is a heavy equipment dealer and repair company in Houston that offers video telemedicine services in its facilities. Five days a week, practitioners see patients with coughs and colds, and take care of blood pressure checks, blood glucose monitoring, and other typical doctor's office services that keep employees in good health.

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Expanding Around The World

Hammack sees great potential for the use of interactive video telemedicine beyond U.S. Borders. In one example, a NuPhysicia doctor travelled to a hospital in Kenya with a mobile Polycom video suitcase solution and, connecting through a simple satellite configuration, was able to examine cases of Rift Valley Fever.

"Rift Valley fever can have tremendous epidemic consequences," Hammack explains. "Using the Polycom equipment, we were able to hear heart and lung sounds, look at the patients' skin, really get a feel for the situation. We were doing all of this literally in the middle of the jungle. It's a great example of the flexibility and the durability of Polycom visual communication systems, and why we use them in all our video telemedicine systems."

The Right Solution

Dr. Hammack is a longtime Polycom video conferencing user and he credits his loyalty to the fact that the solutions are reliable, predictable, and easy to operate.

"Polycom's video conferencing solutions are at the core of our business," says Hammack. "They are easy to install, easy to configure, and easy to use. Our chosen profession – that of providing video telemedicine services – is complicated enough without having to worry about managing overly complicated, un-trustworthy video units."

"And with a patient waiting" Hammack continued, "the systems have to work right the first time, every time."

The NuPhysicia technology solution includes the Evolution™ studios in Houston, which house the Polycom HDX 8000 and HDX 9000, where physicians work full-time. NuPhysicia uses additional Polycom videoconferencing solutions for NuPhysicia's Physician Small Studio™ systems, for doctors to provide services from their offices and homes.

Patient locations are served by NuPhysicia's T-Cart™ cart and B3Zero™ suitcase systems, both of which are based on Polycom HDX 8000 and HDX 9000 systems.

Polycom's global support organization allows NuPhysicia to build and deploy systems configured for any part of the world, and have confidence that they will be well serviced through warranty and maintenance programs.

"220v or 110v power, NTSC or PAL video, ISDN or IP video connections, Polycom has served us in all global environments" said Dr. Hammack. "They've been a true partner for us and have allowed us to expand the reach of medicine in way only previously imagined."

