Banner Health launches telehealth in all hospital COVID-19 units

Virtual doctor visits preserve PPE, add level of safety and efficiency

PHOENIX (June 3, 2020) – In a rapid, yet expansive, deployment of "telehealth" in the acute-care setting, hospitalists and specialists at all 28 Banner Health hospitals now can conduct virtual patient visits on COVID-19 units. This greatly preserves personal protective equipment (PPE) and allows for greater efficiency and patient and staff safety in these busy patient care units.The next phase of this telehealth technology rollout is underway at Banner Health Emergency Rooms.

> *" This is an example of how Banner Health and its clinical teams are leading through the rapidly changing pandemic landscape "*

Physicians can effectively assess patients via two-way audiovisual technology from a safe and private location in the hospital. Instead of having to physically enter each patient room, which requires putting on and taking off PPE for each visit, physicians can now assess patients more efficiently and under safer conditions using this innovative telehealth technology. Hospitalists and various specialists in areas such as infectious disease, pulmonary, critical care, cardiology and nephrology are able to provide critical consultative support for COVID-19 patients.

"The process is streamlined to maintain efficiency in our existing workflows, while preserving vital PPE supplies," said Syed Ismail A. Jafri, MD, physician executive for hospital medicine with Banner Medical Group. "More importantly, the physician-patient relationship has gotten stronger along the way."

Banner Health has partnered with VeeMed, a global telehealth company focused on virtual technology, physician services, and operations, to rollout this newest tool in the Banner Telehealth virtual care toolbox. In addition, Intel, through their [Pandemic Response Technology Initiative](#), provided nearly 1,000 Intel NUC compute devices with Intel vPro® Technology, which transformed the patient room televisions to allow two-way video conferencing. Intel's donation is part of its $50 million Pandemic Response Technology Initiative, created to combat COVID-19 through accelerating access to technology at the point of patient care, speeding scientific research and ensuring access to online learning for students.

This three-way collaboration between Banner Health, VeeMed and Intel is allowing rapid deployment of the newest telehealth technology into Banner's patient care settings. Physicians in the hospital can conduct a thorough exam without entering a patient room. They can check on their patients at any time, including talking with them, viewing their vital sign monitors and, using the advanced camera option, can zoom in close enough to even check a patient's pupils.

 "This is an example of how Banner Health and its clinical teams are leading through the rapidly changing pandemic landscape," said Michael Simons, MD, medical director Telehealth Services. "By implementing novel telemehealth technology to provide seamless, virtual care, we are preserving vitally important personal protective equipment, safely limiting exposure to our amazing hospital staff, while providing excellent care to critically ill COVID-19 patients in our hospitals."

Banner dramatically sped up its timeline to make telehealth services available during the extraordinary circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Banner also recently launched eVisit in its ambulatory care settings to provide virtual visits for patients worried about setting foot in a doctor's office during the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, doctors have conducted more than 30,000 e-visits with patients who previously would have had to physically go to the doctor's office. Banner Telehealth includes more than 3,000 medical providers.

About Banner Health
As one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country, the team at Banner Health is committed to ensuring all Banner locations are a safe place for care. Headquartered in Phoenix, Banner Health owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals and an array of other services, including: Banner Imaging, Banner Telehealth and Banner Urgent Care. Team members are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of patients, be it a routine checkup, elective surgery or an urgent health service. Waiting room and employee workstation layouts maintain proper social distancing; screenings are conducted at hospital entrances to verify that all employees and visitors are well; and, all Banner physicians are equipped to visit patients remotely. Learn more about Banner's commitment to safety at [bannerhealth.com/safecare](#).

For further information: media@bannerhealth.com

http://bannerhealth.mediaroom.com/telehealthforCOVID

http://bannerhealth.mediaroom.com/telehealthforCOVID