

JSA Health Changes the Face of Telepsychiatry with LifeSize HD Video Communications

Telemedicine pioneers JSA Health choose LifeSize HD video to expand business, allow doctors and patients to connect seamlessly for meaningful communication

Organization

JSA Health, Houston, Texas, USA

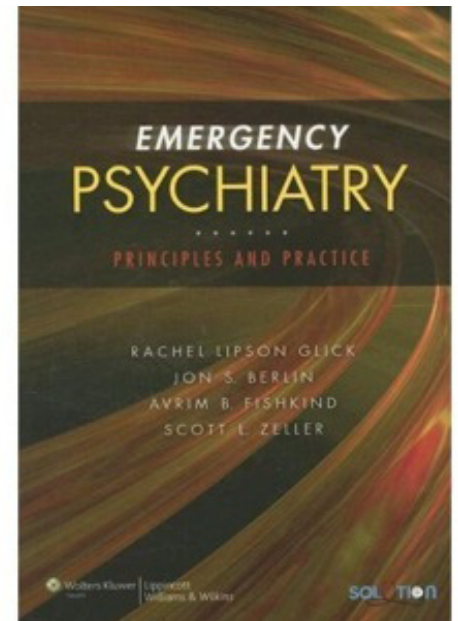
Imagine a 17-year-old girl having suicidal thoughts. A concerned relative takes her to the emergency room at the local hospital. Professional care is certainly needed, but emergency personnel are uncomfortable with how to care for her - they do not keep a licensed psychiatrist on call 24 hours a day. She sits in the ER for 36 hours, vulnerable and scared. After the specialist does evaluate her, follow-up care is prescribed and she is released.

In many cities across the nation, a shortage of mental health care professionals, especially in more rural communities, has caused a significant number of patients to either go without care or in some cases, to wait days or weeks for psychiatric help.

JSA Health was created to provide fast and flexible access to emergent, urgent and routine psychiatric evaluation to mental health patients 24-7. Founded in 2007 by internationally recognized psychiatrists, JSA provides psychiatric emergency services, disaster response and mental health administration as well as access to child, adolescent, adult psychiatrists and substance abuse physicians.

In Texas, there has been a significant shortage of mental health workers in recent years – according to the Texas Department of State Health Services, 184 of the 254 counties in the state have an inadequate number of counselors.

JSA Health steps in to provide psychiatric evaluations in emergency rooms, rural mental health centers, schools and jails.



JSA Health literally wrote the book on emergency psychiatry. The founders coauthored this landmark textbook in 2008.



CHALLENGE

In recent years, the US has seen a shortage of mental health workers. JSA Health needed a technology enabler to make telepsychiatry a reality.



SOLUTION

The easily deployable, simple to use, LifeSize® Express™ HD video system became the communications product of choice for doctors and administrators at JSA Health.



RESULTS

LifeSize helped JSA significantly grow their business, with over 5000 patient encounters in its first year of operation. Roughly 125 hours per week are now spent using video.



Challenge

Well-versed in the discipline of emergency psychiatry, published author and JSA Health President and Chief Medical Officer Avrim Fishkind, MD, along with Vice President Scott Zeller, MD, and Steve Weylandt, CEO, started JSA Health with the idea that technology would have to overcome the continued shortage of mental health practitioners across the country.

“High definition capability allows psychiatrists to meet the need for care in emergency settings; an area of particular shortage,” said Zeller, who is also the President Elect of the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry.

“Telepsychiatry will rapidly become the fastest expanding segment within psychiatry as a whole,” said Fishkind. “Psychiatrists cannot possibly cover the 4,700 medical emergency rooms, inpatient units and intensive care units in the United States.”

Telepsychiatry, or the idea that psychiatrist and patient connect over internet-based video, is not a new idea, but one that has slowly gained acceptance in the psychiatry community.

But in order to make the idea a reality for its founders, JSA Health needed a technology enabler.

“10 years ago, physicians saw the need, but the quality just wasn’t there,” said Weylandt. “Bad audio and blotchy pictures – Doctors were just not comfortable using it.”

JSA Health’s Key Needs:

Superior Quality: HD quality video that provides an in-room effect for doctor and patient

Flexibility: Scalable bandwidth that maintains quality, especially in more rural areas, also simple to use and easy to deploy

Price Performance: Lowest total cost of ownership per site



“Telepsychiatry will rapidly become the fastest expanding segment within psychiatry as a whole.”

– AVRIM FISHKIND, MD, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, JSA HEALTH



Solution

After weighing the pros and cons between the different video communications solutions on the market, JSA Health decided that the HD video offering from LifeSize was the best solution to meet their needs. The compact size of the LifeSize® Express™ product and its point-to-point connectivity made it easy to deploy in all types of environments. And like all LifeSize products, the resolution scales with the bandwidth, so more rural locations would not require upgraded networks in order to see a high quality image.

“There is no question that LifeSize gives us the best quality at the most affordable price,” Weylandt said.

And because most of JSA Health’s clients are mental health centers, schools, hospitals and jails, making good use of taxpayer dollars is important. Whether it be a more integrated room with special A/V equipment added on or a simple HD monitor and video system placed on a mobile cart, LifeSize is flexible enough to deploy virtually anywhere.





Results

Since implementing LifeSize HD video, JSA Health has seen tremendous growth in their business. After seeing its first patient in early 2008, JSA Health has had over 5000 patient encounters.

“We are now serving a growing number of on-going and on-demand patients in 25 locations and counting,” Weylandt said. With LifeSize, we are able to provide care to a much broader range of patients and that’s what makes our work so exciting.”



JSA Health psychiatrists enjoy the flexibility of being able to significantly reduce their travel time and in some cases, see patients from the comfort of their own homes. Because all that is needed is a high speed internet connection, a growing number of JSA’s doctors have video systems in their home offices. Today, JSA Health uses video to treat patients approximately 125 hours per week.

“In one day, I saw patients in four different Texas clinics that would have required me to drive over 600 miles in my car in a single day,” Fishkind said.

Now by using video communications, JSA Health psychiatrists are able to see patients virtually anywhere.



LifeSize®

Experience Communication in High Definition

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