

Telemedicine Distance Learning for Education of Remote Healthcare Providers

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ABSTRACT

Background: Telemedicine (Tmed) Distance Learning was developed to enhance the availability and accessibility of the educational opportunities offered at Walter Reed. Distance education involves teaching through the use of telecommunications technologies that transmit and receive various materials through voice, video state-of-the-art equipment.

Methods: The Tmed Directorate manages a 24-port Picture Tel Montage 570B Video Bridge that supports Tmed Consultation, Distance Learning, and Administrative meetings. Most distance learning sessions use still visual presentations, such as, slides or transparencies negating a need for high bandwidth. The North Atlantic Medical Regional Command, broadcast all distance learning sessions at 2 x 64 Kbps allowing access without the expense of an inverse multiplexor. Special video teleconferencing (VTC) sessions at higher bandwidths are conducted with prior arrangements.

Physician education includes Medical Grand Rounds for multiple all specialties. Patient education programs include the WRAMC Wellness Center's "Weight Control." Administrative VTC allows attendance at various administrative meetings and presentations without travel.

Results: The interactive nature of VTC provides Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit for. Educational credits are approved for in-house and healthcare providers at outlying facilities. The distributions of utilization of over 9,000 Teleconsults are currently undergoing analysis.

Conclusion: The Directorate provides credited educational presentations to remote healthcare providers using innovative technologies.

