

A CLOUD-BASED APPROACH TO HEPATITIS C CARE IN PATIENTS WITH SUBSTANCE USE

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Background: The TrueNorthMedical.com telemedicine addiction program services thousands of patients in Ontario across 50 communities. Our group does over 3000 OTN (Ontario Telemedicine Network) visits per month. Approximately 40% of our patients are Hep C Ab +ve. Our traditional approach to Hep C was to refer our patients to Hepatology clinics. Unfortunately, many of the towns we work in have no Hep C clinics. Moreover, even when we could find Hep C clinics for our patients, these clinics generally required referrals, scheduled appointments, off site lab testing etc. Because of these barriers- Less than 1% of our Hep C patients ended up getting treatment in this “traditional” model.

Description of model of care/intervention: TrueNorth now provides Hep C care using an innovative cloud-based model. Instead of sending patients off site for testing and appointments, we instead offer **on-site** Hep C Ab “POC” (Point of Care) testing and Hep C genotype “DBS” (Dried Blood Spot) testing. Hep C patients are then assessed and offered “hassle-free” Hep C treatment on-site. Assessment and treatment are available on a walk-in basis with no appointment, no referral. We accomplish this by using a wide of cloud-based tools including OTN videoconferencing and the use of a cloud-based EMR that is shared between the addiction program and the Hep C program.

Effectiveness: In our 2018 initial pilot (in Toronto and Windsor) we treated over 40 patients with comorbid Hep C and substance use disorder using this model. SVR12 among these patients was over 95%. In 2019, we plan to roll this program out to an additional 10 sites.

Conclusion and next steps: Using cloud-based technology allows programs and sites to pool resources in ways that face-to-face simply cannot. In our experience, providing Hep C care using cloud based technology is not only feasible, it has many advantages.

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