

## Details of Renown TeleHealth Expansion October 17, 2016



Since launching in 2012, Renown TeleHealth has grown to provide much needed care at 30 locations in Nevada and California. This \$436,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, along with an additional \$290,000 from Renown Health, will allow Renown to add and expand services at 21 rural telehealth sites – 14 in Nevada and seven in eastern California.

The funding will help establish high-definition, secure videoconferencing technologies that provide rural residents access to specialty, hospital and transitional telehealth services as well as distance learning for educational classes and support groups, many of which are not currently available due to geographic barriers and provider shortages.

“Healthcare delivery is a critical factor in the overall economic viability of rural, medically underserved areas in Nevada and northern California,” Kirk Gillis, vice president of accountable care for Renown Health said. “TeleHealth technologies are important lifelines for rural patients. In this case, these locations will now have access to specialty care, hospital care, transitional care services as well as health and wellness programs for chronic illness right in their own communities.”

The grant will fund various patient services through telehealth:

- Specialty care: Using telehealth at rural facilities will allow patients with chronic conditions to schedule consultations within 35 different specialties – eliminating much of the need to travel for appointments with a specialist
- Hospital services: Rural emergency room providers can consult with Renown’s emergency providers on a variety of conditions including stroke to help keep patients in their local hospital, deliver high-quality care immediately and avoid unnecessary transfers to Reno
- Transitional care: Providing telehealth services for rural patients receiving care at home, a rehabilitation hospital, or skilled nursing facility will optimize patient transitions after discharge, therefore cutting down on preventable readmissions
- Distance learning: Health and wellness classes will be offered through videoconferencing – teaching rural residents how to manage new diagnoses and chronic conditions such as heart failure and COPD, as well as self-management for diabetes and nutrition for overall health

The combined population of these 21 communities is more than 290,000 and through this grant, Renown estimates it will provide approximately 600 telehealth appointments each month. Telehealth has a number of benefits for both patients and the communities where they live. Staying local means fewer patient costs for travel, hotels, childcare and even lost wages. Offering ancillary services, such as laboratory testing and imaging, at local facilities also keeps more dollars in local communities. By expanding these services, Renown aims to improve both healthcare and overall health and well-being in these counties.

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### About Renown Health

Renown Health is a locally governed and locally owned, not-for-profit integrated healthcare network serving a 17-county region comprised of northern Nevada, Lake Tahoe and northeast California. Renown is one of the region’s largest private employers with a workforce of more than 6,000. It comprises three acute care hospitals, a rehabilitation hospital, skilled nursing, the area’s most comprehensive medical group and urgent care network, and the region’s largest and only locally owned not-for-profit insurance company, Hometown Health. Renown has a long tradition of being the first in the region to successfully perform leading-edge medical procedures. For more information, visit [renown.org](http://renown.org).