

# Virginia Cardiovascular Specialists Sees Patients in a New Way

## THE CHALLENGE

### When offices become quiet

COVID-19 marked the end of business as usual. In mid-March, Virginia Cardiovascular Specialists experienced an approximately 80 percent drop in return patient and non-urgent patient visits. Hospitals stopped all elective procedures, and providers faced an unprecedented slowdown in work.

Similar to practices across the nation, Virginia Cardiovascular Specialists implemented a myriad of preventive measures to protect patients and providers.

## THE SOLUTION

### Find a new way to see patients

The need to adopt virtual visits became apparent when the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) lifted burdensome telehealth regulations. For example, patients no longer needed to live in underserved areas to participate in a virtual visit from their home. Virtual visits could be reimbursed at the same rate as an in-office visit.

“This created the opportunity for practices to move forward and see patients,” said Patrick Toomey, assistant administrator for Virginia Cardiovascular Specialists. “We made a decision Thursday afternoon to go with NextGen Virtual Visits™. The integration process was completed by Sunday afternoon, and the implementation team went over and above to get us ready for Monday morning. As soon as a physician was trained, they began meeting patients virtually.”

For the cardiovascular group, virtual visits mainly cover routine appointments. “If a patient has a pacemaker, defibrillator, and/or a remote monitoring system, they can provide information to the practice by phone a day or two before their virtual visit,” said Paula Furcron, clinical lead nurse for Virginia Cardiovascular Specialists. “During the visit, the provider can examine their face for any warning signs or ask the patient to scan down their camera to check for any possible swelling in the ankles.”

### Patients catch on

“It did not take long for virtual visits to become the norm for patients,” said Toomey. “The first week, it was brand new, but they suddenly realized they had to do something to see their physicians, so they quickly picked it up.”

“Patients appreciate virtual visits because they don’t have to get dressed up and travel to the office,” said Furcron. “A 92-year-old woman was just fine with her virtual visit. It took her ten minutes to check her blood pressure and weight, but overall she managed everything very well.”

## CLIENT PROFILE

### Virginia Cardiovascular Specialists

#### Location

- Eight clinics across Central Virginia

#### Background

- Dedicated to providing the best care possible for patients with heart disease, vascular disease, or heart rhythm problems
- Provides diagnosis and treatment of heart attacks, stroke, and peripheral artery disease utilizing the most advanced technology available in a personal and compassionate manner

#### Services

- Cardiovascular subspecialty areas, such as cardiovascular intervention, carotid stenting, CT angiography, heart rhythm disorders, vascular disease and intervention, and preventive cardiology
- Cardiovascular accredited testing, including cardiac CTs and cardiac PETs

## NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

- NextGen Virtual Visits™

## HIGHLIGHTS



**Telehealth implemented**  
in three days



Virtual visits **integrated** with  
**clinical workflow**



Virtual visits can be  
**billed without** the need  
for **manual tracking**

## THE RESULTS

### Integrated workflows make it easy

Staff members who normally check in patients at the front desk began calling them to let them know that their appointments would be changed to virtual visits and walk them through the change. The patients were told to expect an email that explains how to make the connection to their provider. “The switch to telehealth was easy,” said Toomey.

He added, “Since the telehealth solution integrates smoothly with the workflow, we quickly changed our scheduled visits from physical visits to virtual ones.”

### Sitting room in the comfort of home

After the patient answers questions and signs waivers, the virtual visit is marked within the workflow. Nurses can see the patient, review their vitals, medication history, and prep them for the physician. Then, they mark the patient as ready for the physician. Providers input data in real-time while talking to the patient just as if they were sitting in the exam room. This data goes into the EHR/PM system directly.

Once the physician finishes their virtual visit, they sign the template. The bill is processed that night without the need to track it manually. “This tightly integrated workflow benefits our clinical staff because it indicates that the patient has received care from a particular physician and has been billed accordingly,” said Toomey.

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Patrick Toomey  
Assistant Administrator  
Virginia Cardiovascular Specialists



## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Partner with us at **855-510-6398** or **results@nextgen.com**.