



Clever Health Update November 08

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We need to your help—the Interns need a new name desperately

With all apologies to Tandberg, while the mobile VC units are fantastic, calling then the 'INTERNS' in hospital settings is just not possible.

Send me your ideas via email and we will conduct a straw poll to find a new name for use in the Grampians region.

I'm sure I can find a very nice bottle of wine (Integrated Vision might even sponsor it) for the person who suggests the name chosen.

Telepsychiatry in US

Telepsychiatry is among the two fastest-growing sectors of telemedicine, said Jon Linkous, chief executive of the American Telemedicine Association. (The other is the monitoring of chronically ill patients through video conferencing.) Telemedicine's growth, he said, can be seen in the number of videoconferencing hubs set up mostly by hospitals. There are 200 hubs, where doctors and specialists treat patients, at 3,000 clinic, schools and prisons nationwide. The growth of telepsychiatry in Texas, in part, is related to the shortage of mental health workers — 184 of Texas' 254 counties have an inadequate number of counsellors, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services. Of the nation's five most populous states, Texas has the fewest number of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers per 100,000 people, according to a report by the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, based in Austin. This worker shortage is much more pronounced in the state's rural and border areas. With good video equipment, a psychiatrist can see nearly everything necessary for an optimal evaluation, Thomas said. He'll zoom in on a child's hand to confirm it is trembling or move the camera to see how a mom or an El Paso clinician reacts to a child's remarks.

"It's not really different from seeing patients face to face. And it helps reduce barriers and improves access to care," Thomas said.

UTMB also provides child psychiatry services to school districts, including several in the Rio Grande Valley as well as telepsychiatry for some women's shelters in East Texas.

Going the distance The West Texas Centres for Mental Health and Mental Retardation provide services to a relatively small number of people spread out in 23 counties covering 25,000 square miles. Staffing its 15 mental health centres isn't easy, said Janet Payne, West Texas Centres director of mental health services. "It's hard to get psychiatrists to come out here — West Texas," she said. "We're out in the middle of nowhere." West Texas Centres lacks the staff for round-the-

clock care. Texas is considered a leader in telemedicine and telepsychiatry because both are widely used to care for 170,000 inmates in the state prisons and state jails. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice contracts with two leaders in telemedicine, UTMB and the Texas Tech University's Health Science Center to provide and oversee health care at its facilities.

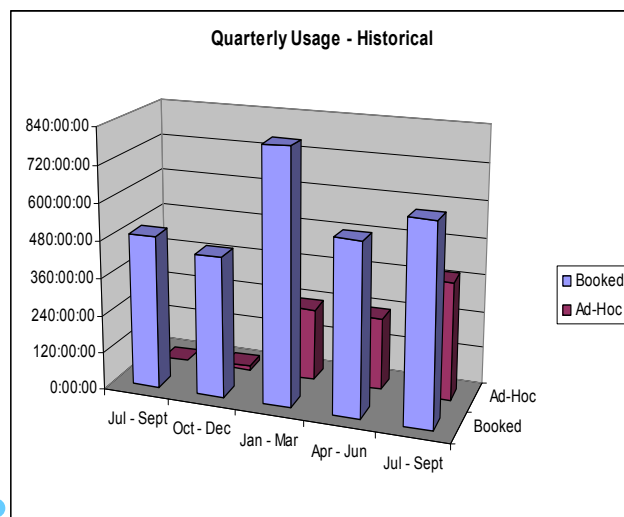
Joseph Penn, director of mental health services for UTMB's Correctional Managed Care, said 30 to 60 percent of inmates in most state prisons suffer from mental disorders. With a shortage of psychiatrists nationwide, the majority of psychiatrists choose to live in urban and suburban areas, and most aren't choosing to work with inmates, he said. Many prisoners are evaluated by UTMB psychiatrists working out of a videoconferencing hub in Huntsville. They prescribe medication and supervise cases. Therapists at prisons handle counselling sessions, Penn said.

"We can have a (telepsychiatrist) provider see 15 inmates in the morning and 15 in the afternoon," he said. "If he were seeing them at a prison, he'd be lucky to see five in the morning and five in the afternoon."

Trouble shooting for VC

If you have any difficulty with a videoconference booking, either making the booking, or dropping out, sound problems or whatever, Please call the Integrated Vision HelpDesk on **1800 654 548**. The helpful crew are there to support the use of the VC network across the region and are much more contactable than the staff at GRHANet. And will be able to assist you with your difficulty immediately.

The graph below is part of the report GRHANet is sent on a quarterly basis by Integrated Vision, which monitors the use of the videoconference network across the region. Not only are we seeing a sustained increase in use of the booked VC but look at the huge increase in the use of the VC on an adhoc basis.



Evaluation of Videoconferencing - we are seeking your opinion of the videoconferencing network and your experience of using it as part of our drive to improve the service offered by GRHANet and the Clever Health project to the health services in the region.

All you need to do is click on the link listed below and it will take you to a short web based survey.

http://www.cric.com.au/cb_pages/vcsurvey.php