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RENOWN HEALTH AWARDED NEARLY \$1 MILLION GRANT FROM THE FCC TO SUPPORT TELEHEALTH PROGRAMS AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Funds used to stand up virtual screenings, purchase telehealth equipment, provide virtual care and enhance remote monitoring services to help keep the community safe

RENO, Nev. (June 15, 2020) – [Renown Health Foundation](#) announced today that it is the recipient of a \$977,720 grant from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for its COVID-19 Telehealth Program. The funding will be used to offset the expenses of various telehealth programs implemented during the current COVID-19 pandemic. A portion of the grant will also be used to help Renown expand its remote monitoring capabilities, reshaping the way patients receive care from the comfort of their homes.

“Virtual technology is shaping the future of medicine and how we deliver care to our patients,” said Tony Slonim, MD, DrPH, president and CEO of Renown Health. “It’s convenient, fast, reliable and accessible to everyone with a mobile device. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, I have witnessed the incredible power of technology to ensure our patients receive quality care when and where they need it. I look forward to the future of digital health as we continue expanding our virtual service offerings, contributing to a happier, healthier community.”

Renown will use a portion of the funding to offset expenses incurred to establish the virtual COVID-19 visit screenings for the pandemic. These on-line, virtual visits allowed individuals with signs of respiratory illness across Nevada and California to be screened by a care provider for COVID-19. Previously, a screening was required for patients to receive a test, making this a critical tool to help our region flatten the curve.

The grant will also support Renown’s efforts to introduce a dedicated platform to enable all specialists and urgent care providers to deliver virtual care to patients, if their care needs can be met through a virtual platform. These visits have been essential as community members continue to practice physical distancing and many live in rural communities.

“We are incredibly thankful for the support of the FCC, as this grant has already played a huge role in the way our community receives the care they need and deserve,” said Renown’s chief development officer, Greg Walaitis. “During the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, it will help us ensure all patients in our area have access to care from their homes or nearby locations.”

Furthermore, the grant will support some of the technology and equipment used in Renown’s [Alternate Care Site](#) located in its Mill Street Parking structure.

“Though we are fortunate our Alternate Care Site remains unused today, the facility is equipped with computers and tablets embedded with telehealth solutions, all supported by the FCC grant,” said Renown’s director of telehealth, Mitchell Fong. “This technology would allow our providers to treat and monitor our patients with COVID-19 without being exposed to the virus, so they can remain healthy and a vital part of the care team where they are needed most.”



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Renown purchased video conference software licenses to support these virtual programs. Aside from connecting patients to care providers, the technology was used to enhance a patient's hospital stay and make them feel more emotionally comfortable and connected.

"Before initiating our [Patient Supporter program](#), we weren't allowing visitors in our hospitals due to the pandemic to help keep patients, staff and our community safe," said Fong. "The purchase of video conferencing licenses helped patients from all hospital units connect with loved ones via videoconferencing calls facilitated by their care providers. We know these interactions are an important aspect of a patient's healing experience, and the FCC grant made it possible for countless patients to stay in touch with their external support networks."

Finally, the FCC funding will allow Renown to expand and enhance its remote monitoring services, particularly for hospital patients who have recovered from COVID-19. Renown is currently exploring tools for providers to virtually – and seamlessly – monitor and track their patient's oxygen levels, among other vitals, once they go home. This will aid in smooth and efficient transitional care, as the recovery period after a patient is discharged from the hospital is considered exceptionally critical.

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About Renown Health

Renown Health is a locally governed and locally owned, not-for-profit integrated healthcare network serving northern Nevada, Lake Tahoe and northeast California. Renown is one of the region's largest private employers with a workforce of more than 7,000. It comprises three acute care hospitals, Renown Children's Hospital, Renown Rehabilitation Hospital, 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 and commitment to continually improve the care and the health of our community. For more information, visit renown.org.