BACKGROUND

- Pain is a common problem for patients in the U.S. and is responsible for over 100 million ambulatory encounters in the U.S. each year, and pain issues also cause more than 40% of all symptoms-related outpatient appointments per year.
- The word telehealth is defined as “the use of telehealth technologies to provide clinical care in circumstances where distance separates those receiving services and those providing services.”

CLINICAL VIDEO TELEHEALTH (CVT) is a form of telehealth that involves using mid-level transmission of clinical video and audio rather to effectively connect a patient with a healthcare provider for care remotely.

- The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has stated that approximately 41% of Veterans receiving care from the Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system live in areas of the country where they have limited access to specialty care for a variety of disease states, including complex pain management.

OBJECTIVES

PRIOR OBJECTIVE

- To evaluate patient satisfaction with the CVT pain management clinic by obtaining a written feedback assessment from enrolled patients. (FIGURE 1)

SECONDARY OBJECTIVE

- To explore possible benefits of the CVT pain management clinic, including benefits on travel time and distance saved for the Veteran, and potential cost savings for the VA.

METHODOLOGY

- Patients currently receiving care from the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center (WPB VAMC) pharmacy pain management clinic are eligible to participate in the CVT pain management clinic.
- Patients are offered the opportunity to enroll in the CVT clinic if they meet the enrollment criteria.
- The patient has been relatively stable on a pharmacological pain regimen for 1 to 2 years and they feel safe and secure, making it safe to move the patient to a community-oriented outpatient clinic (COOC) from the WPB VAMC.
- The patient has minimal hepatic and/or visual deficit. The patient does not have a physical or neurological exam.
- The patient may also be enrolled in the CVT clinic.

RESULTS

- A total of 18 patients were seen for a total of 112 visits in the CVT pain management clinic between July 1, 2013, and December 31, 2013. The most common pain condition treated was low back pain, with 67% of the patients being treated for this condition. The three most common pain medication classes that patients were treated with in the CVT pain management clinic were opioids (71%), gabapentinoids/gabapentin (46%), and muscle relaxants (16%).
- The average cost savings for the WPB VAMC per patient visit was $31.81.
- Overall, there was a 90% satisfaction with the CVT pain management clinic appointment, and 90% of patients agreed that they would recommend telehealth to other Veterans.
- The no-show rates between the CVT pain management clinic and the WPB VAMC pain management clinic between July 1, 2013, and December 31, 2013 were very similar. There was no no-show rate for the CVT clinic, and a 4% no-show rate for the WPB VAMC pain management clinic.

CONCLUSION

- Overall, the responses to the written feedback assessments were overwhelmingly positive. Furthermore, the significant miles saved for the Veteran, as well as the cost savings for the WPB VAMC, indicates that this service has tangible benefits currently as well as the possibility of continued benefits in the future. As the CVT pain management clinic continues to operate, it can be expected that miles saved for the Veteran and cost savings for the WPB VAMC will continue to grow.