

CASE STUDY

GLADSTONE LINK PROGRAM

ANYWHERE HEALTHCARE SPECIALIST TELEHEALTH



IN SUMMARY...

CUSTOMER

Gladstone Foundation

CHALLENGE

Address a shortage and cost of allied health services in the Gladstone region

SOLUTION

Anywhere Healthcare allied health services via video telehealth – from home, GP clinics, schools and community hubs

RESULTS

- Over 10,000 allied consultations delivered to date
- More than 15 community telehealth sites in operation
- Highly positive feedback from the community on the impact of the program
- No clinical incidents

THE CHALLENGE

The Gladstone Link program was developed to address a shortage of allied health care services in the Gladstone region of Queensland as a result of population growth due to increased industrial activity.

Existing allied health services in the region often had long waiting lists and consultation costs were high as these services do not attract a Medicare rebate. Residents were also having to travel out of region to see a health service provider, meaning they were away from home, work and school for extended periods.

The Gladstone region already had a high uptake of specialist health services provided by Anywhere Healthcare, and local health providers wanted to see this extended to allied health.

THE SOLUTION

To solve these challenges, Anywhere Healthcare was awarded funding from the Gladstone Foundation in 2013 to provide 10,000 allied health consultations via telehealth over a two year period from May 2014.

Anywhere Healthcare, through the Gladstone Link Program, provides the technology platform which enables patients in Gladstone to connect with the appropriate allied health professionals via video. All clinical services are conducted one-on-one between patient and clinician via secure video conferencing.

Patients attend their online consultation in one of four ways:

1. From their **home** using a computer or tablet with broadband connection, with support from Anywhere Healthcare to set up their videoconferencing prior to the consultation.
2. Via a **health or wellness service provider**, such as community support services or GP clinics, who provide the room and equipment required
3. From their **school**, specifically for speech language pathology and occupational therapy services
4. From a **community hub access point**, such as Community Health Centres and GP Clinics for patients who don't have reliable internet, with support to login and participate in consultations.

“Best service I have ever used! Wish I had known about it before I hit 'crisis' level.” Psychology Patient

Success Factors

Key to the Gladstone Link program success was making it easy for clients to access allied health services, on an ongoing basis, resulting in meaningful and lasting outcomes. Appointments are made via a dedicated 1800 number which clients or referrers can call directly. School based services are managed through written referrals and parent consent managed via email.

Anywhere Healthcare is also responsible for the promotion and marketing of the services to health service providers, community based support agencies and the general public promotes uptake of services from a broad community base including clients who have previously been disillusioned with lack of services and choice of service provider.

Services offered

Services offered via the Gladstone Link program currently include:

- Psychology services - the most widely utilised service for adult clients. Following their booking, the patient has an initial matching session to ensure they are paired with an appropriate psychologist for their needs.
- Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language pathology – this is a school based service operating throughout each school term. Referrals are received before the start of term, and initial assessment and therapy planned as a package over the course of the term. School, family and therapists work together to achieve the best outcomes, through formal interviews with parents and teachers at the start of term, regular feedback, and worksheets and activities to complement the therapy sessions.
- Dietetics and diabetes educator services - are also available and usually completed in the home via video.

“We are rural and relatively isolated school. Parents find it very difficult to access therapy services because of distance. The Gladstone Link Therapy program provides this need. EXCEPTIONALLY professional, high quality, intensive and reliable.” Learning Support Teacher

The technology

The Anywhere Healthcare technology platform includes both custom-built video conference technology suitable for clinical consultations and a back-end system for tracking and supporting consultations. The video conference solution is web-based for easy installation, has an intuitive interface for both client and clinician and is interoperable with other systems for reminders to patients, secure data transmission and dictation services. The platform is secure with high levels of encryption and servers are located within Australian borders.

To ensure an effective telehealth consultation without interruption, most host sites including schools and community hubs utilise a dedicated internet connection such as broadband or mobile 4G device. High volume host sites were provided a dedicated laptop and connectivity, or an iPad with mobile network access to ensure a stable internet connection for Gladstone Link services.

THE RESULTS

To date, the Gladstone Link program has delivered the following results:

- More than 10,000 clinical consultations have been delivered to clients ranging from 3 years to 86 years of age
- There are more than 15 community telehealth sites across the region in GP offices, schools and community health centres.
- There have been no clinical incidents
- Children participate in the telehealth format eagerly with the majority experiencing exceptional results
- The Gladstone region community has embraced telehealth services as a viable alternative and feedback regarding the effectiveness of the clinical service is overwhelmingly positive

For more information on how Anywhere Healthcare and telehealth can benefit you, call Telstra Health on 1800 HEALTH (1800 432 584) or contact your Telstra Account Executive.

ABOUT GLADSTONE FOUNDATION

The purpose of the Gladstone Foundation is to provide a structured approach to allocate funding that addresses the social infrastructure needs of the people of the Gladstone Region. The Gladstone Foundation works with people and organisations to provide the most appropriate funding solutions for the social infrastructure needs of the people of the Gladstone region.

The Gladstone Foundation have been closely involved in funding the delivery of an extensive range of projects that result in the people of the Gladstone region experiencing the highest standards of social equity, social innovation and social stability.