



W O R K F O R C E TRENDING NOW

From the office of William J. Grubbs, President & CEO of Cross Country Healthcare

September 2, 2016

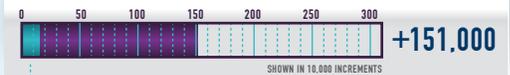
EMPLOYERS ADD 151,000 JOBS IN AUGUST; UNEMPLOYMENT HOLDS STEADY AT 4.9%

Employers added just 151,000 jobs August, a number that was lower than the 180,000 predicted by economists, but not wholly unexpected as August has been a traditionally tough month for jobs numbers. This follows above average gains in both June and July. Healthcare followed this trend, adding just 14,000 jobs during the month, after an average monthly gain of 39,000 over the prior 12 months. Ambulatory care added 13,000 new positions, followed by hospitals with 11,000, while nursing and residential facilities saw a loss of about 9,000 jobs to offset strong gains in July. Employment numbers were revised down from +292,000 to +271,000 in June, but were revised up from +255,000 to +275,000 in July, for a combined 1,000 jobs less than previously reported. Total job gains in all industries has averaged 232,000 per month over the past three months.

(Source: <http://bls.gov>)

AUGUST JOBS ADDED BY SEGMENT

ALL U.S. JOBS



HEALTHCARE JOBS +14,000

AMBULATORY CARE +13,000

HOSPITALS +11,000

NURSING & RESIDENTIAL CARE -9,000

TELEMEDICINE: IS THE FUTURE OF QUALITY HEALTHCARE LITERALLY AT OUR FINGERTIPS?

The movement to make healthcare more affordable has seen many hospitals and providers struggle to stay in the black while maintaining quality care. An emerging technology is promising to alleviate some of the industry's biggest headaches with a solution that advocates say can save both patients and providers time and money while improving care outcomes. This month's Workforce Trending Now takes a closer look at the rise of Telemedicine, which according to the American Telemedicine Association (ATA), is currently being utilized by more than 50% of all U.S. hospitals in some context.

Currently, the ATA recognizes 200 Telemedicine Networks and 3,500 Telemedicine Service sites in the United States. Proponents of Telemedicine say the technology is a clear win-win for both patients and providers. As doctors' offices and emergency rooms are flooded with newly insured patients and additional paperwork, wait times for appointments and the length of time spent at those appointments continue to increase. Ambulatory care facilities have absorbed some of the overflow in the form of urgent care facilities, but for many, a traditional office appointment is their first course of action when it comes to most minor ailments. Currently, a visit to the doctor can entail having to take a partial or even full day off for many people when travel time is added to the equation, while actual face-to-face time with that physician currently averages about 15-20 minutes. On the other hand, a telemedicine appointment that can be conducted via cell phone video has the potential to save both parties time and money. This could prove especially useful for patients in rural and remote areas without easy access to providers or facilities.



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TELEMEDICINE: AT A GLANCE

AVERAGE COST OF DOCTOR VISIT:

Video-based appointments:



\$50

In-person office appointments:



\$80

Time Americans spend making doctor visits annually:

2.4
Billion Hours

Value of this time at average wage rates:

\$5.2
Billion Dollars[Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/17/upshot/you-mean-i-dont-have-to-show-up-the-promise-of-telemedicine.html?_r=0][Source: <http://www.americantelemed.org/about-telemedicine/faqs#.V8W5PrXVswQ>]

TELETHERAPY: A SOLUTION TO THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST SHORTAGE

One medical field that is already seeing the benefit of Telemedicine in the form of Teletherapy is Speech-Language Pathology, which is facing a shortage of almost 30,000 practitioners through 2024, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Many Speech Therapists are carrying extremely heavy caseloads, oftentimes more than is recommended by state limits. Speech-Language Therapy via Teletherapy offers a format that today's children readily adapt to since many of them have grown up learning with internet-connected devices. One study found that teletherapy services allows students to complete 60 minutes of traditional on-site therapy in just 35 minutes, because the virtual format allowed them to focus their attention more clearly than in an in-person format. Additionally, teletherapy allows providers to treat multiple students as well as students in remote or rural locations, and its convenience allows for greater participation and inclusion of teachers and parents.

TELEMEDICINE PROS AND CONS CURRENTLY UNDER DEBATE

Critics argue that virtual appointments can never replace an in-person visit to a physician and could potentially put patient privacy at risk when it comes to virtual providers accessing their medical records. Advocates insist the technology can be used successfully to treat minor ailments and has the additional benefit of being able to triage non-emergencies, which could alleviate wait times in overwhelmed provider offices and emergency rooms.

Still in its infancy stage, there is ongoing debate between physicians, hospitals, consumers, insurance companies and regulators about what telemedicine is, what it entails, individual rights and responsibilities and more. All arguments aside, Telemedicine is on the rise. In January, Doctor on Demand, a service which provides physician and psychologist video visits via a smart device app, announced it had signed its 400th employer customer, bringing the total number of Americans covered by its service to more than 45 million. Their employer customers include American Airlines and Lennox International. Additionally, two of the federal governments largest healthcare programs, The Veterans Health Administration and Indian Health Services, have already found measurable success in utilizing Telemedicine service for their patients.

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TELEMEDICINE PROS AND CONS CURRENTLY UNDER DEBATE (CONTINUED)

A Veterans Health Administration Home Telehealth program established to help aging veterans with chronic health conditions avoid hospital admissions noted the following results:

REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF BED DAYS OF CARE:

25%

REDUCTION IN THE NUMBERS OF HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS:

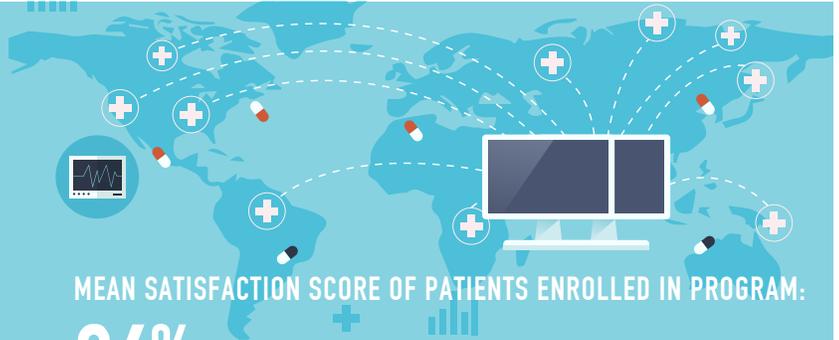
19%

MEAN SATISFACTION SCORE OF PATIENTS ENROLLED IN PROGRAM:

86%

ANNUAL COST OF PROGRAM PER PATIENT:

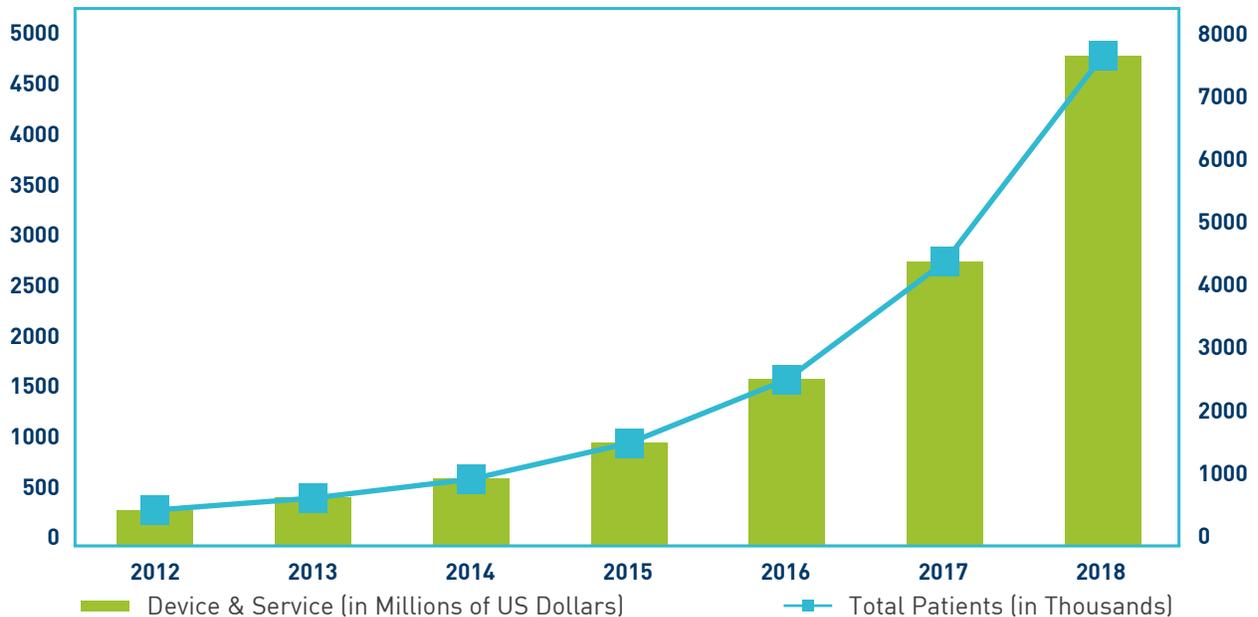
\$1,600



[Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19119835>]

GLOBAL FORECAST OF TELEHEALTH PATIENTS, DEVICE AND SERVICE REVENUE

(THOUSANDS OF PATIENTS AND REVENUE IN MILLIONS OF US DOLLARS)



[Source: IHS Technology, January 2014]