

## CASE STUDY: TELEPSYCHIATRY

# Improving Behavioral Healthcare Across a Health System

Boarding and dispositioning patients experiencing a mental health emergency requires considerable resources. Due to inefficiencies in caring for this population, a large multi-facility health system was experiencing widespread throughput deficiencies in its emergency departments (EDs), including excessive length of stay (LOS) and psychiatric holds. These challenges were not only impacting hospital operations and financials, but most importantly, they were detrimental to behavioral health patients' treatment and recovery.

As a known and trusted clinical partner with an in-depth understanding of county-based regulations and protocols in California, Vituity was selected by the health system to help. In 2018, Vituity implemented our telepsychiatry program in a 373-bed facility near Los Angeles. After initial success, the program was quickly rolled out at three additional facilities.

### Responding to the Needs of Patients

Vituity's 24/7 on-demand telepsychiatry program provided early diagnosis and initiation of therapy and medication management while patients were still in the ED. Our program delivered an efficient and practical solution to address behavioral health patient care, LOS, psychiatric holds, and boarding.

### Results Achieved

**BY NIGHT 3**, there were zero 5150 holds in the ED, when there were previously two to four 5150 holds per night. A 5150 hold refers to the California law code for a temporary, involuntary psychiatric commitment of individuals who present a danger to themselves or others.

**IN ONE MONTH**, there were over 50 telepsychiatry consults, involuntary holds were declining, and patient care was improving.

**IN FOUR MONTHS**, improvements were achieved in time to provider (TTP), turnaround time to discharge (TAT-D), and turnaround time to admit (TAT-A) for all patients—those with medical and behavioral health emergencies.

*From the Director of Nursing...*

“Telepsych services through Vituity have not only reduced our overall length of stay for our psychiatric patients but they have also helped our clinical team obtain an in-depth assessment to truly decide the plan of care for these patients. This has reduced our emergency department psychiatric holds by 50%.”

## Benefits of the Integrated Service Delivery Included:



Appropriate, compassionate, and timely care designed to stabilize and treat behavioral health patients



Avoidance of unnecessary hospital admissions, reduced care delays, and minimized boarding



Physicians brought together in a collaborative model that yielded positive benefits for hospitals and patients

## Improving Patient Flow and Transitions of Care

The addition of Vituity's telepsychiatry services has also positively impacted patient flow outside of the ED.

Patient discharges to the system's county-based, voluntary Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) have increased. Through telepsychiatry evaluation, the ED can obtain consent from patients to be quickly and safely transferred to the CSU to commence treatment and stabilization in an effective and cost-efficient setting.

Our telepsychiatry can also improve care for patients who are admitted. Recently, we provided a telepsychiatry consult to a patient who had been seen by Vituity physicians in the ED and then later we provided the patient with additional, needed care on a neurology inpatient basis.

## A Transformative, Integrated Approach To Improve Care Delivery for All ED Patients

Since our founding in 1971, we've been perfecting best practices in ED management to ensure efficient, high-quality care. Today, we are defining a new standard of care for behavioral health patients.

Our transformative, integrated solution combines expertise in emergency and behavioral healthcare delivery with formalized education and training for ED clinicians. This comprehensive approach empowers EDs to properly treat behavioral health patients, resulting in improved efficiency and quality of care for all patients in the ED.

### About Vituity

As a physician-led and -owned partnership, Vituity drives positive change in healthcare, providing integrated acute care across the country while serving 6.4 million patients annually. Vituity's acute focus and compassionate care are the driving forces that have placed us **at the heart of better care.**

To learn more, visit  
[vituity.com](https://www.vituity.com).

