

Newman Memorial Goes Live With New Service Lines Via Telemedicine

Newman Memorial Hospital is pleased to announce that we are now scheduling appointments for three new specialty physicians who will provide services to our community using telemedicine technology. Our new physicians include Dr. Paul Berkowitz, M.D., a board certified psychiatrist, Dr. Stavros Maragos, M.D., board certified cardiologist and Dr. Kenji Oyasu, M.D., board certified in emergency medicine and a practicing opioid addiction physician. NMH is actively bridging the gap that exists between rural communities and access to specialty care using innovative technology along with the same personal, professional touches that our service area has come to expect and rely upon.

Telemedicine utilizes specialized technology that connects patients to physicians and services that are not typically available in our area. If you have ever seen or used Skype or FaceTime, then you have a general idea what the technology is like. Telemedicine uses audio and video multimedia telecommunication equipment that permits two-way, real-time communication between a doctor and a patient who are not in the same physical location.

When you schedule an appointment with one of these physicians, you will be taken to a private patient room where you, your family and the doctor will all be able to see each other on a large computer screen. Secured internet cameras and digital stethoscopes are used along with the assistance of a trained nurse to allow the doctor to talk to and examine you. You can ask questions and discuss your treatment plan with immediate feedback from the physician just as if he or she were in the room along with you.

This technology is very secure and complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) Security Rules and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations. It utilizes point to point tunneling encryption, meaning no one can hack into it and all records are stored in a secure server, just like any other doctor visit. NMH is also using a dedicated internet connection so that the speed issues that you sometimes get with a shared connection are not applicable.

Telemedicine is an innovative way to connect people in rural areas to a specialty physician right here at home. But will it be covered by insurance? Oklahoma state law requires coverage of telemedicine services by health care service plans, disability insurer programs, workers' compensation programs and state Medicaid programs. When you, or your physician, call to schedule an appointment with the cardiologist, psychiatrist or opioid addiction physician, you will be preregistered by the Newman Memorial Hospital registration team. Your insurance benefits will be checked and verified so that you know ahead of time what your responsibility will be and what services are covered.

In most instances, in accordance with state law, these visits are covered just like any other visit with a specialist....without the 6 hour round trip drive! To find out if telemedicine is right for you or your loved one, talk to your physician about a referral. To schedule an appointment, call the main hospital number 580-938-2551 and get connected to the specialist you need, where you need them!