

Telemedicine Services

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Every child deserves access to the best medical care possible. A child's treatment options shouldn't be limited by being lucky enough to live near a world-class medical center. New developments in technology now make it possible for doctors and patients to interact across the state, the nation and the world.

Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare is expanding our telemedicine services to improve access for families living in underserved areas in Greater Minnesota, around the United States and in other countries.

Telemedicine—the diagnosis and treatment of patients remotely using advanced communications technology—is not a new concept for Gillette. In fact, in 2002 we installed some telemedicine equipment to allow patients in Greater Minnesota to see our physicians by videoconference. Some Gillette physicians have been seeing patients via telemedicine for more than 10 years.

This is a solid achievement but we want to do more to make sure every family who could benefit from our medical expertise has access to our providers. This requires expansion or renovation of certain facilities and the purchase of telemedicine equipment at all sites and on our main campus in St. Paul, MN.

Gillette has one of the more extensive clinical outreach programs in Greater Minnesota of any health system. Travel to the St. Paul campus can be difficult for families with a child who has disabilities and might be in a wheelchair. In addition, the telemedicine appointments ensure the right patients are being seen by the right provider before the patient has to leave their home area. This increases efficiency, improves treatment outcomes and makes for a better family experience.

Telemedicine improves access to our Gillette providers and makes it easier for us to connect with other medical professionals around the globe. This new technology brings opportunities for Gillette experts to collaborate with health providers and treat patients who have complex, rare and traumatic conditions.

We're committed to expanding telemedicine to better serve our patients and to ensure we're better stewards of our patient's and physician's time. Our plans include:

- Expansion/renovation of Gillette locations in key Greater Minnesota locations.
- Telemedicine infrastructure in all Gillette clinics and outreach locations.
- Recruitment of providers dedicated to Greater Minnesota locations.
- Training and staff development.

The Gillette telemedicine program helps kids have access to the best medical treatment possible—no matter where they live. Please contact our foundation at 651-229-1726 for more information.



Tom Novacheck, MD, often uses telemedicine appointments to meet with his patients.



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In Venezuela, South Dakota and beyond— telemedicine changes lives

It took months of coordination by Gillette staff, a series of flights from Venezuela, a seven-hour surgery, weeks of intensive physical therapy, and thousands of prayers to reach this moment.

Twelve-year-old Yael Wahnnon stood up from her wheelchair and willed her legs to take a few tentative steps during her last visit with Gillette orthopedic surgeon Tom Novacheck, MD.

"It's amazing, spectacular!" Yael's mother, Nathalie, exclaimed through an interpreter. "When she came here she could not stand up or really even sit up straight in her wheelchair. Now she's standing!"

Yael's medical journey began when a friend told the Wahnnon family about Gillette and its reputation as a world leader in caring for patients who have cerebral palsy. Nathalie Wahnnon explains there are few, if any, good options for Yael to receive care in their native Venezuela.

The Wahnnon's wrote a letter to Gillette requesting care. Several months later, they met Novacheck during a telemedicine appointment. The video conference had two purposes. First, it allowed Novacheck and the Gillette medical team to evaluate Yael's condition. Medical records from other countries can often be misinterpreted and missing key information. Second, the visit enabled the Wahnnon family to see the team who would be providing life-changing surgery for their daughter.

Once the telemedicine appointment confirmed Yael was a good candidate for treatment, the Gillette international team arranged for the necessary paperwork, visas and logistics. Novacheck performed five surgeries on Yael in a seven-hour session. Today Yael continues to improve and she'll make regular visits back to Gillette to continue her progress.

Yael's story is not unique. Closer to Minnesota, Ava Hausmann was receiving treatment for cerebral palsy from her doctor in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Despite bracing and casting treatments, Ava continued to struggle. Her doctor arranged for a telemedicine consultation with Novacheck and a clear treatment plan was crafted without the cost or burden of a nearly four hour trip to Gillette. Novacheck and his team were prepared when Ava did eventually come to Gillette to receive surgery.

Ava and her family have seen visible improvement—less pain, better mobility and endurance—since her surgery at Gillette. Today, Ava continues regular check-ins via telemedicine with Novacheck and she appreciates spending more time at home.

Your gifts to Gillette make it easier for us to expand telemedicine services to better serve our patients no matter where they live, and to connect with providers around the globe.

Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare is named in honor of orthopedic surgeon Arthur Gillette, MD, who helped found our nation's first hospital for children who have disabilities. We are an independent, not-for-profit children's hospital, and our organization has no affiliation with the Gillette Company or the Gillette brand of personal care products.

April, 2017



After a telemedicine appointment, Yael and her mother traveled from Venezuela to receive treatment at Gillette.



Ava has appointments with Tom Novacheck, MD, in person and via telemedicine.