Rapid response to surging demand

Saving lives by enabling virtual care at scale during COVID-19 and beyond
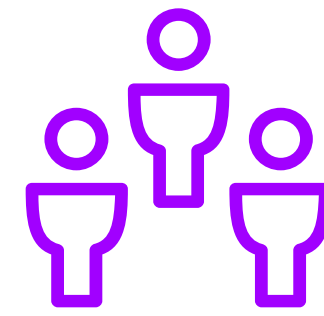
accenture

A call for change

Keeping the virtual health platform running under pressure

Once COVID-19 struck, patient demand for virtual doctor visits spiked seemingly overnight. A national telehealth leader based in the US covering 80 million people, 2,000 hospitals, 55 health plan providers and 81,000 doctors—was seeing a **1,000 percent increase in demand** across the health systems and payers it serves, which maxed out the capacity of the company's telehealth platform and their in-house provider network.

Time was of the essence as patient lives were on the line. The company had to react quickly to keep platform performance up to allow providers to care for patients around the clock. The organization reached out to Accenture as a proven partner to help with the stability and scaling of the platform as well as assisting the clinical operations team with physician onboarding.

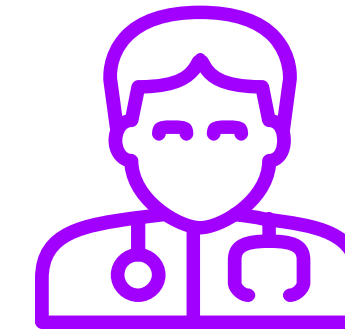**The organization in numbers:**

80
million people covered

55
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81,000
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When tech meets human ingenuity

Avoiding bottlenecks to enable fast diagnosis

Accenture immediately mobilized a team of 25 people to jump right in to help the organization scale the platform to keep up with unprecedented demand. The team's work focused on three main initiatives:

1 **Diagnostics**

A critical first step was pinpointing where system bottlenecks were limiting the ability to scale and meet urgent needs in virtual care.

2 **Expert architecture support**

Diagnostics uncovered the bottlenecks in the architecture, so the team worked with the telehealth leader's architects, developers, testers and operational personnel to make suggestions quickly—from application re-engineering to network optimization to Oracle database tuning.

3 **Doctor onboarding**

Accenture provided business and technology support to help onboard doctors 86 percent faster. This helped meet the demand for care after system bottlenecks were resolved.

The telehealth leader's doctors and staff were doing the most important work possible: **saving lives**. The team was working tirelessly, and Accenture was able to step in to quickly provide relief. The Accenture team worked overtime to help scale the platform so that the organisation could meet demand and allow payers and providers to serve patients with high-quality virtual care during this unprecedented time.

With the platform working at full capacity, the telehealth leader's workers could onboard an unprecedented number of doctors at speed, quickly enabling clinicians to support those in need of virtual care—even as patient volume spiked.

A valuable difference

Five years' growth in just two months

In just two months, the telehealth leader reached the number of patients it expected to reach in five years without the pandemic. The system improvements also enabled them to shorten the timeline to onboard doctors at scale as volume spiked. Rather than onboarding a couple of hundred a month, they began onboarding several thousand per week, getting people the care they need, whenever they need it. Efficiencies in the system helped decrease the total time to complete the onboard process by 86 percent. We also helped to identify a network configuration issue that was creating data center bottlenecks. Once resolved, large provider networks were able to care for patients.

Virtual health is here to stay, and now the organization has the system capacity to meet demand during surges such as COVID-19, but also in the future as more patients choose virtual options.

The organization's research shows that more than half of all consumers said they expect to use telehealth more often following COVID-19, while 92 percent of providers said they expect to continue video visits after it is safe to see patients in person. Surveys by Accenture confirm the view that the pandemic has permanently altered patient behavior.

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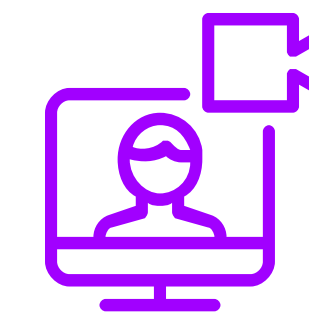
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