

# NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

## Telemedicine reduces ER visits and shortens hospital stays for patients with chronic diseases

**TORONTO, ON, September 18, 2014/CNW** - The use of telemedicine to help manage chronic diseases yields clear benefits including fewer, shorter hospital stays, fewer emergency room visits, less severe illness and fewer deaths according to a new study published in Telemedicine and e-Health.

Telemedicine patients also proved to be more engaged in their health management.

Researchers analyzed telemedicine studies of congestive heart failure (CHF), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and stroke to determine the impact of telemedicine on access to and quality of care as well as cost.

“This work confirms what we have long known in Ontario – telemedicine can play a vital role as part of health care delivery for the benefit of patients as well as the sustainability of the system,” says Dr. Ed Brown, Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN). “This is particularly true in the case of chronic disease which, in Ontario, accounts for 55 per cent of direct and indirect health costs.

In Ontario, OTN Telehomecare provides remote patient monitoring and health coaching for patients with CHF and COPD. Delivered through hospitals and Community Care Access Centres around the province, Telehomecare provides simple-to-use technology which patients use to measure signs and symptoms of their condition. Results are monitored by specially-trained clinicians who provide telephone health coaching. More specifically, said Dr. Brown, “our Telehomecare work with William Osler Health Centre shows a significant reduction in excess of 40% in ER visits and hospital admissions among patients enrolled in this program.”

Dr. Brown is a contributing author of the study, The Empirical Foundations of Telemedicine Interventions for Chronic Disease Management. Lead authors Rashid Bashshur, PhD, Gary Shannon, PhD, and Brian Smith, MS, led a team of clinicians and researchers from the U.S. and Canada. Telemedicine and e-Health is a peer-reviewed journal and the official journal of the American Telemedicine Association and the Canadian Telehealth Forum of COACH, a health informatics association. The study is available online at <http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1089/tmj.2014.9981>

## **About OTN**

The world leader in telemedicine, OTN helps Ontarians get more out of the health care system by bridging the distance of time and geography to bring more patients the care they need, where and when they need it. Using innovative technology, OTN streamlines the healthcare process, while also expanding the way knowledge is shared and how the medical community interacts with each other and with patients. An independent, not-for-profit organization, OTN is funded by the Government of Ontario and Canada Health Infoway. For more information please visit [www.otn.ca](http://www.otn.ca) and [www.otnresults.ca](http://www.otnresults.ca).

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For more information about Telehomecare and chronic disease management visit: [www.OntarioTelehomecare.ca](http://www.OntarioTelehomecare.ca)  
[www.RxTelehomecare.ca](http://www.RxTelehomecare.ca)

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