CARING FOR MARGINALIZED PATIENTS USING REACTS

HOW REACTS HELPS SUPPORT RAMCARE’S INNOVATIVE SOCIAL VIRTUAL MEDICAL CARE PROGRAM

Better communication.
Better efficiency.
Better care.

www.reacts.com
Are all Canadians getting access to the health care they need? The average person might assume yes, since Canada has a system of universal health insurance, but Canada’s medicare system is in fact falling short, as marginalized Canadians across the country regularly slip through the cracks.

Marginalized individuals or segments are those who are excluded from and have a hard time engaging with mainstream society and often have difficulty accessing key services such as health care. Consequently, they are considered to be high health risk populations, and include newcomers to Canada, Aboriginals and members of other minority groups, the elderly, the disabled, those living in poverty, and basically anyone who is otherwise socially, linguistically, financially or geographically isolated. It is important to distinguish between a health insurance system and a health care delivery system. When people are disadvantaged and marginalized, it’s not enough to say that their health care will be paid for; we need to realize that there can be many other barriers to obtaining the needed care.

For example, a study by the University of Toronto and St. Michael’s Hospital of homeless individuals in Toronto found that 17% of them - or about one in six - reported unmet needs for care. Mothers with children who were living in family shelters were more than twice as likely to have unmet needs for care than the average mother with children living in Toronto. A similar study of homeless people across the US found that 32% had been unable to obtain needed medical or surgical care in the past year.
Addressing the problem: RAMcare

Dr. Dennis DiValentino, President of the Hamilton Academy of Medicine and Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at McMaster University, had long perceived how the isolated and less fortunate have had difficulty accessing health care, and sought to improve the situation, if only by modest means. Together with Dr. Richard Tytus, Associate Clinical Professor of Family Medicine at McMaster University and past Chair of OntarioMD, they co-founded RAMcare, a telemedicine initiative dedicated to leveraging emerging technologies to the Canadian patient’s benefit while ensuring an exceptional standard of care.

“This is a unique application of telemedicine for individuals who don’t often work well with traditional models of medical access. It allows them to virtually visit a physician and address their care requirements from an environment that is familiar to them.”

-- Dr. Dennis DiValentino
Co-founder, RAMcare
**RAMcare’s adaptable model**

The vision for RAMcare, as detailed by Dr. DiValentino in a Joule Innovation podcast interview ([Caring for Marginalized Patients](https://soundcloud.com/user-172049536/caring-for-marginalized-patients)), follows a realistic progression:

- **Short-term:** Help marginalized individuals locally and demonstrate the value of this social initiative for patients.

- **Mid-term:** Demonstrate how this initiative should be expanded to other parts of the healthcare system, and other geographic areas. For example, RAMcare is presently providing in-home medical care and support for the residents and staff of retirement homes in Ontario.

- **Long-term:** Expand such healthcare accessibility programs across Canada, in a variety of settings and applications.

To date, several vital organizations have helped support and nurture RAMcare’s social initiative, including the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), and the South West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), by identifying and referring high need and high emergency department usage individuals.

---

**The solution**

An affordable remote collaboration platform that would allow for versatility and scalability.

**The technological component**

The Reacts collaborative platform’s subscription-based model and robust feature set allows healthcare professionals and caregivers to collaborate easily across platforms and geography.
National Support: the Canadian Medical Association

In 2017, RAMcare was awarded the first ever Social Innovation grant from Joule, a subsidiary of the Canadian Medical Association. The $25,000 grant advances RAMcare’s mobile telemedicine initiative aimed at delivering improved care to individuals with mental illness, addictions, immobility and those unable to access a health care provider. Such mobile medical units deliver comprehensive consultations in real time and are equipped with otoscopes, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, etc., and placed in convenient locations for immediate access to a healthcare provider when urgently needed, through partnerships with charitable organizations such as the Good Shepherd Centre.
Facilitating the process: Reacts

It didn’t take long for key stakeholders at Joule to realize the potential synergies at hand when looking at their Social Innovation award recipients and at IIT/Reacts who teamed up with Joule to bring Reacts to CMA members all across Canada. The Reacts’ innovative platform’s track record of varied telehealth and collaborative applications was a clear match for RAMcare’s needs for a flexible system that could provide security, versatility, mobility, easy deployment, and also keep pace with their anticipated expansion.

Once introduced, the RAMcare team quickly took note of Reacts’ innovative capabilities and features, as they had been exploring the market for over a year, and the options they’d tried were complicated, often not reliable, and required heavy time commitment for implementation.

“We’d been looking for over a year for a system that allowed us to do everything we needed and which had the ease of use necessary for our busy healthcare practitioners. Once Reacts came onto our radar, it quickly became the obvious choice.”

-- Dr. Richard Tytus
Co-founder, RAMcare
Towards a new model of care

RAMcare’s social telemedicine initiative, combined with Reacts’ remote collaboration capabilities, offers new possibilities for healthcare professionals to reach marginalized patients in their own settings and deliver care that might otherwise be inaccessible. Reacts’ versatility, flexibility and reliability allows RAMcare’s professionals to expand their innovative care model and eventually adapt it to various clinical applications, thereby laying the foundations for significant change in the healthcare system. It is through their desire to improve patients’ lives and collaborations with valuable partners such as Innovative Imaging Technologies, Joule (a subsidiary of the Canadian Medical Association), the Ontario Telemedicine Network and Ontario’s Local Health Integration Networks that innovators such as Dr. DiValentino and Dr. Tytus can hope make a difference.
Reacts (Remote Education, Augmented Communication, Training and Supervision), is a secure, integrated collaborative platform created by Quebec-based Innovative Imaging Technologies Inc. (IIT). It was designed to suit the multiple collaborative needs of healthcare professionals and patients, and incorporates unique and unparalleled interactive features, such as augmented reality for remote virtual guidance, supervision and training.

Reacts is presently being used in 28 countries, across various medical disciplines in both clinical and educational settings, for applications ranging from secure messaging, remote wound care, tele-ultrasound, and teleconsultations, to interactive tele-surgical assistance and remote procedural supervision. Strategic partnerships include medical device manufacturers and healthcare innovation focused organizations such as Joule, a Canadian Medical Association company. For more information, visit: www.reacts.com.
Discover hyperpresence!

Better communication.
Better efficiency.
Better care.