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**INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENT RECOGNIZES
NHS HIGHLAND TELEHEALTH PROGRAM**

NHS Near Me initiative uses technology to expand health care access in rural Scotland

Boston, MA – November 19, 2019 – The [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#) (IHI), a leader in health and health care improvement worldwide, has chosen NHS Highland to receive this year’s IHI Lucian Leape Institute Medtronic Safety Culture & Technology Innovator Award. The award will be presented at the 2019 [IHI National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care](#), being held December 8–11 in Orlando, Florida.

The award program was created with an unrestricted educational grant from [Medtronic](#), inaugural funder of the IHI Lucian Leape Institute, to recognize teams that improve patient safety through the successful implementation of technology and culture change.

NHS Highland, part of National Health Service (NHS) Scotland, provides health and social care services to the Scottish Highlands, an especially rural part of Scotland that includes 40 percent of the country’s land mass but only 8 percent of its population. The team is being recognized for the “NHS Near Me” program, which uses telehealth technology to expand access to health care services in the region.

“This work aims to reduce the impact of travel on patient care and improve equity of access to services by enabling patients to attend video appointments from their homes or from a local clinic,” said **Clare Morrison**, program lead, NHS Near Me.

Earlier this year, Morrison described how [the project’s success](#) depended on much more than innovative technology. She and her team spent six months co-designing the service with patients, clinicians, and nonclinical staff, and conducted more than 100 tests of change before creating a standard process. “We also created a network of clinic rooms that patients can easily get to if they don’t have good internet connectivity at home or a device with which to connect,” she said.

In the first year of the service, 902 video consultations were completed, saving an estimated 180,100 travel miles and 4,227 hours of travel time. While not all appointments can be conducted remotely, by October this year (seven months into the second year of the service), the number of video consultations provided had grown to 2,538. Some 31 clinical specialties now offer the video appointments, which are quickly growing in popularity.

“We know that inequitable access to care is a patient safety concern,” said **Tejal K. Gandhi, MD, MPH, CPPS**, Chief Clinical and Safety Officer, IHI, and President of the IHI Lucian Leape Institute. “Through this program, the NHS Highland team has successfully harnessed technology to improve not only operational efficiency, but also the overall quality and safety of care for their patients.”

(more)

“We congratulate the NHS Near Me team for their dedication to their patients, their creative use of telehealth technology, and their recognition of how change affects all parties involved – from patients to clinicians to nonclinical staff,” said **Frank Chan**, Vice President and General Manager, Minimally Invasive Therapies Group, Medtronic. “This work truly embodies the spirit of the Safety Culture and Technology Innovator Award.”

This year’s IHI National Forum features inspiring keynote presentations and 150 sessions in [10 topic tracks](#), including improvement science, patient safety, care and health for older adults, and population health.

Members of the press are invited to attend the IHI National Forum and receive access to all [keynotes and sessions](#). Keynotes and Spotlight Sessions will be available via [livestream broadcast](#). For press passes to either the in-person or virtual program, contact Joanna Clark at Joanna@CXOCommunication.com.

About the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is an independent not-for-profit organization based in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. For more than 25 years, IHI has used improvement science to advance and sustain better outcomes in health and health systems across the world. IHI brings awareness of safety and quality to millions, catalyzes learning and the systematic improvement of care, develops solutions to previously intractable challenges, and mobilizes health systems, communities, regions, and nations to reduce harm and deaths. IHI collaborates with a growing community to spark bold, inventive ways to improve the health of individuals and populations. IHI generates optimism, harvests fresh ideas, and supports anyone, anywhere who wants to profoundly change health and health care for the better. Learn more at ihi.org.

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