



## A True Collaboration: A Tribal Community Meets Unique Patient Needs With Integrated Telepsychiatry



### THE CHALLENGE

#### Geographic barriers, cultural concerns

Building a strong care team to support community mental health is a top priority for Forest County Potawatomi. By turning to telepsychiatry, the community has overcome geographic and cultural barriers to make that vision a reality.

Located in Crandon, Wisconsin, Forest County Potawatomi provides healthcare, education and other services to families living on the reservation. Most staff live more than an hour's drive away, making it difficult to recruit quality behavioral health professionals on-site. As a result, residents often had to travel up to three hours away to receive care, preventing many from receiving the treatment they needed.

The tribal community also needed mental health clinicians who would be sensitive to the residents' challenges, from ongoing substance abuse issues to years of intergenerational trauma. After trying unsuccessfully for six months to hire an in-person clinician, Forest County Potawatomi recognized that telepsychiatry could connect the community to a broad range of clinically and culturally appropriate professionals.

### THE SOLUTION

#### Establishing an effective team

Forest County Potawatomi partnered with Regroup to expand access to behavioral health. As a leading provider of integrated telepsychiatry services, Regroup provides the high-quality clinicians, tools and support to improve mental health access for all, regardless of where they live.

From the start, the two organizations have shared a commitment to delivering services personalized for the tribal community's residents. Regroup matched Forest County Potawatomi with a skilled telepsychiatrist and advanced practice nurse, and both Regroup staff and the clinicians visited the community in person to build rapport with the on-site staff. To help address substance abuse issues in the community, Regroup's clinicians and medical director collaborated with local care teams to prescribe controlled substances only when necessary.

That collaboration extends to all aspects of the program, with Regroup's clinicians charting directly into Forest County Potawatomi's EHR and meeting with on-site staff to discuss specific patients and treatments. Patients see the same clinician weekly, helping to build trust and make treatment more effective. Potawatomi's advanced practice nurse has even provided care on-site as the two organizations continue to strengthen their working relationship. Forest County Potawatomi also collects patient feedback directly through RegroupConnect™, Regroup's videoconferencing platform, to monitor and continually improve its services.

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"Hiring and retaining quality clinicians on-site was a tremendous challenge for us. Thanks to Regroup, we now have a team of professionals who are highly competent, culturally sensitive, and take the time to understand the needs of our community and our residents."

**Julie Beeney, Interim Director Health Division and Clinical Services Administrator, Forest County Potawatomi**

# 4 out of 5

patients are very  
satisfied with their care

# 100%

of patients want  
to continue care

# 80 patients

served weekly  
on average

## THE RESULTS

### A happier, healthier community



Through its partnership with Regroup, Forest County Potawatomi now has a strong integrated care team to meet its population's significant mental health needs. Key benefits include:

- **A true clinical collaboration.** Regroup's clinicians have become a seamless extension of Forest County Potawatomi's primary care team. The professional team works together closely to make day-to-day decisions, and Regroup's psychiatrist consults with Potawatomi's medical director to promote a collaborative approach to each patient's care.
- **The flexibility to grow.** As patient needs change, Forest County Potawatomi can easily adjust its telepsychiatry services to match. While the community launched its telepsychiatry program with an advanced practice nurse and a psychiatrist, it soon added a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) to meet additional demand. The reception was so positive, the LCSW's services have expanded from 24 to 40 hours a week.
- **Convenient, effective care.** With skilled, caring clinicians available instantly on-screen, the community is finally getting the mental health support it needs. Patients no longer have to travel for hours to see a psychiatrist or therapist, and program feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

"As a tribal community, we have unique concerns and considerations when providing mental health care. Regroup has listened carefully to our needs and helped us create workable solutions, such as closely monitoring controlled substance prescriptions. Thanks to our partnership, Forest County Potawatomi is helping more residents manage their mental health successfully."

**Julie Beeney, Interim Director Health Division and Clinical Services Administrator, Forest County Potawatomi**

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