

## Background

A 250-bed community hospital in the Midwest faced escalating costs and workflow challenges when using multiple locum tenens and rotating telemedicine providers. Hospital staff struggled with inconsistencies in communication, varying documentation practices, and lack of familiarity between the providers and the care teams.

## The Challenge

1. **High Costs of Coverage:** Reliance on locums and multiple telemedicine vendors led to inflated coverage costs and billing complexity.
2. **Staff Frustration:** Nurses and ED physicians worked with dozens of different remote providers, creating inefficiency and confusion.
3. **Inconsistent Care Delivery:** Providers unfamiliar with the hospital's workflows caused delays in treatment decisions and documentation errors.
4. **Limited Relationship Building:** Without a consistent group of physicians, there was no continuity or trust built between the hospital staff and remote specialists.

## The STeM Solution: Virtual POD Model

In 2024, the hospital partnered with Specialist TeleMed (STeM) to implement its **Virtual POD Model**, a dedicated group (typically 5–7 physicians) assigned specifically to their facility.

### Key Components of the Solution:

- **Dedicated Team of Specialists:** Instead of dozens of rotating providers, the hospital worked with a consistent POD of seven neurologists.
- **Lower Costs Through Efficiency:** A smaller, dedicated POD reduced onboarding, credentialing, and training costs compared to managing dozens of individual providers.
- **Relationship-Driven Care:** Physicians in the POD became familiar with the hospital's workflows, nursing staff, and patient population.
- **Consistency in Documentation & Orders:** Using standardized templates, all consults, documentation, and orders were entered directly into the hospital's EMR.

### Results

Within the first 9 months of Go-Live the hospital realized measurable value, including:

- **Cost Reduction:** Telemedicine coverage expenses were reduced by 22% compared to the prior year.
- **Improved Staff Satisfaction:** Nurses reported a 45% increase in satisfaction scores, citing familiarity and smoother collaboration with the POD physicians.
- **Streamlined Workflow:** Documentation errors dropped by 35% due to consistent practices across the POD.
- **Faster Response Times:** ED physicians noted average consult initiation times decreased from 18 minutes to under 8 minutes.
- **Clinical Outcomes:** With more reliable collaboration, door-to-needle times for stroke patients improved by 30%.

### Hospital Testimonial

“Working with the same small group of physicians has changed everything for our staff. We no longer waste time explaining processes to new providers every week. The STeM POD model has brought efficiency, consistency, and trust into our telemedicine program, while lowering our costs.”

– Chief Nursing Officer

### Why the STeM Virtual POD is a Game Changer

- **Cost-Effective:** Reduces credentialing, onboarding, and administrative costs.
- **Consistent Collaboration:** Hospital staff and physicians know each other, leading to faster decisions and stronger teamwork.
- **Quality and Continuity:** Familiar physicians deliver more reliable documentation, treatment plans, and compliance alignment.
- **Staff Engagement:** Nurses and ED teams feel supported by a consistent group of physicians who “know their hospital.”

### Conclusion

STeM's **Virtual POD Model** delivers more than cost savings, it provides hospitals with consistency, trust, and efficiency in telemedicine care. By assigning a small, dedicated group of physicians, hospitals experience smoother workflows, improved clinical outcomes, and stronger staff satisfaction while reducing overall program costs.

**Contact Specialist TeleMed (STeM) to learn how our Virtual POD Model can bring cost efficiency and consistency to your hospital.**