

# OUTSIDE **THE** LINES

## **MICRO AND VIRTUAL: SAY HELLO TO TOMORROW'S HEALTHCARE**

Amidst the immense and highly scientific world of healthcare, who would think that “micro” and “virtual” have a chance for success? I refer here to “micro-hospitals” and “virtual care clinics.”

Both are potentially big new ideas for healthcare delivery.

[Microhospitals](#) are the “mini-me” of community-based, acute care hospitals. Typically, they have less than a dozen beds, are small (less than 50,000 square-foot), include emergency, lab, imaging and many outpatient services, and are designed for low-acuity patients. They are already being added inside many regional integrated health systems as new, lower-cost care sites and are significant as a potential solution for addressing rural healthcare – or other



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**HEALTHCARE**  
OF TOMORROW

underserved – needs. In addition, they are being embraced as a new way to provide “right time, right place” care. This trend is already well on its way. [Dignity Health](#), Colorado-based [SCL Health](#), and Dallas-based [Scott & White Health](#) have all added microhospitals and are exploring the addition of more.

On the other hand, virtual care clinics are the “on steroids” version of virtual or tele-care. [Mercy Virtual Care Center](#) seems to be the mover and shaker in this category. Opened less than two years ago, in October 2015, Mercy Virtual is a \$54 million, 125,000-square-foot facility that is home to 330 Mercy clinicians, but with no beds, no physical services, and no patients on-site. With this, it serves patients at 38 hospitals in 7 states – from North Carolina to Oklahoma – assists in many physicians’ offices and even reaches into the patients’ homes. It is the virtual care [partner with Penn State Health](#) and [UNC Healthcare](#).

According to *U.S. News & World Report*, in a story titled [“Are Virtual Care Clinics the Wave of the Future,”](#) Mercy Virtual “is taking telemedicine to a ‘whole other level,’ ... and the concept is working. The same seems to be true of the new microhospitals movement. So what of the healthcare of tomorrow? Why not let the colors of

these new ideas paint new pictures for the future,  
per the inspiration of Pablo Picasso: "I begin with  
an idea and then it becomes something else."

Always looking ahead,



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## NEWS ALERT! WHAT'S HAPPENED THIS WEEK

This week, Strategy Advantage and [ZIGZAG Healthcare](#) – our online market intelligence tool that features hundreds of new ideas and disruptive innovations in healthcare – added a new set of “Up-and-Comer” executive summaries. While not yet – in our opinion – ready for “prime time,” the up-and-comer summaries provide an additional resource for healthcare executives to stay ahead of the curve and on top of the explosion of the many new technologies and other innovative models of care that are re-shaping healthcare delivery. To receive a complimentary copy of some of the up-and-comer summaries or to hear more about ZIGZAG Healthcare, contact our ZIGZAG Healthcare Director, [Kala Kascht](#).

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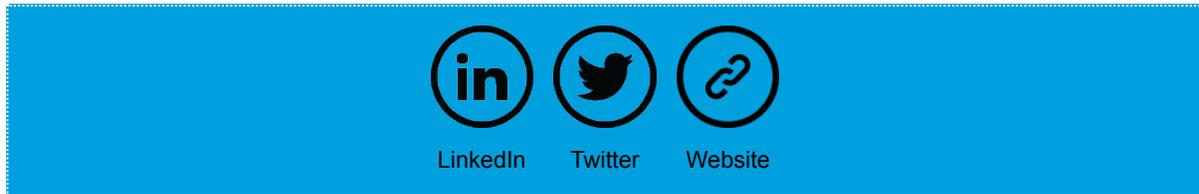
## WHO WE'RE WATCHING

In the virtual care clinics [U.S. News & World Report](#) article referenced above, two additional innovators were mentioned. Both may be worth watching. [Carena](#) provides a virtual care clinics platform for hospitals and other healthcare provider organizations. Health systems like CHI Health (headquartered in Nebraska) and Virginia Mason (in Seattle) use Carena to power their virtual care services. [JeffConnect](#) was also featured, designed by Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia and also available (as we understand it) as a virtual care clinic platform for partner providers.

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## WHAT'S TRENDING

If you want to read more about Mercy Virtual Care Center, or if you're looking for a good summary piece that provides current trends on telemedicine, check out this [Wall Street Journal article](#), published just two months ago. According to the American Telemedicine Association, as reported in this article, more than 15 million Americans received some form of care remotely in 2015, and this will increase by 30% in 2016. This tide of change, however, is still only just building. Many people (almost 40%) – including “tech-savvy consumers” – haven't even heard of telemedicine. Also, only a small number of family physicians (15%) are using tele-visits in their offices.



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