ECU School of Dental Medicine Improves Access to Dental Care in Rural Communities

The customer summary

Customer name

East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine

Industry

Education

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CISCO

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East Carolina University (ECU) School of Dental Medicine delivers dental services to rural communities while ensuring their students stay connected.

- Eight remote clinics, or Community Service Learning Centers (CSLCs), allow ECU to treat patients from every county in North Carolina.

- Students and residents complete their rotations at the CSLCs while staying connected to their classroom instruction.

- The CSLCs use telemedicine to deliver care and connect patients to specialists when needed.
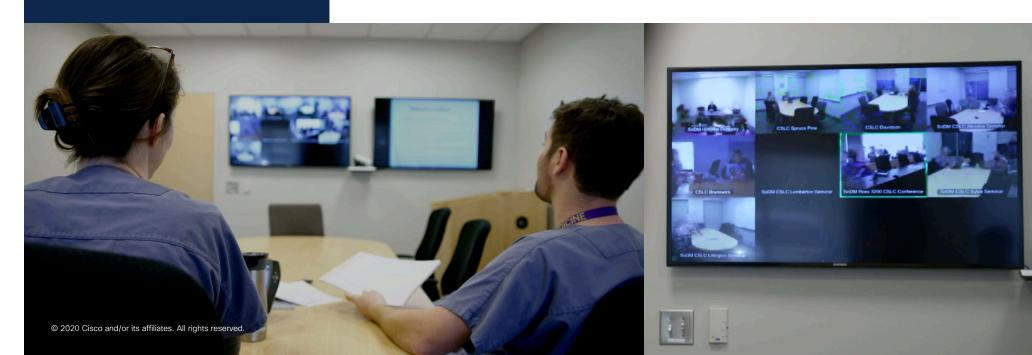
Introduction

In rural communities, lack of access to medical services and expertise contributes to poor overall health. This includes critical dental care. East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine is changing this landscape by educating students and post-doctoral residents, giving them hands-on experience serving in rural communities, and providing much-needed dental care in underserved areas across North Carolina. Technology plays a key role in making this vision a reality.

"Telehealth has really changed how we deliver healthcare services in rural areas. We have an opportunity in dentistry to take that to the next level."

T. Rob Tempel, Jr., DDS, MSS
Associate Dean for Extramural Clinical Practices,
ECU School of Dental Medicine

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"We're educating our students on technology that they're going to be using as it evolves over the next ten or fifteen years. So when they go out into communities that are not really accessible to specialists and other people, they'll know how to interact with that technology."

Craig Slotke, DDS, FAGD
Faculty Director, ECU School of Dental Medicine
Community Service Learning Center, Robeson County

The business challenge and results summary

A robust network infrastructure and secure data center and collaboration solutions from Cisco® allow ECU School of Dental Medicine to educate students and post-doctoral residents and provide access to dental care for patients in rural communities across North Carolina.

Across eight clinics, called Community Service Learning Centers, students and residents get hands-on clinical experience under the watchful eye of faculty, interact with remote specialists, and attend classes and seminars as if they were right on campus in Greenville. Professors in Greenville deliver lectures, discussions, and exams to students and residents both on campus and in the CSLCs using Cisco Webex® and Cisco collaboration solutions. Students and residents in the CSLCs use telemedicine solutions to interact with specialists in remote locations. End-to-end security including Cisco Umbrella®, Cisco Advanced Malware Protection (AMP), Cisco Stealthwatch®, and Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE) ensures that patient, student, resident, and faculty data across the network is safe.

By the time students and residents graduate and begin their careers in dentistry, they are comfortable with the technology that can help rural communities connect, they know specialists who they can rely on in the future, and they understand what it's like to serve people living in rural areas.