



Black Hills  
Health Care System  
Department of Veterans Affairs



Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

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# News Release

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 13, 2012**

## **VA Black Hills Health Care System Goes “Live” with Tele-ICU**



With several large monitors showing data and the patient simultaneously, clinicians have all of the clinical data immediately at hand during a time critical consultation.

A “second set of eyes” can now monitor patients at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals across the VA Midwest Health Care Network. This week, the VA Black Hills Health Care System will be going “live” with Tele-ICU and working collaboratively with the Minneapolis VA Medical Center to provide this new service to hospitalized Intensive Care Veterans at the Fort Meade VA Medical Center.

The integrated, Minneapolis-based team of critical care nurses and intensivists (doctors who specialize in critical care medicine) is now available 24/7 to aid patients and clinicians in ICUs at VA hospitals in Minneapolis, MN, Fargo, ND, Omaha, NE, Iowa City and Des Moines, IA, Fort Meade and Sioux Falls, SD. Seventy-five ICU beds can be monitored by a highly trained team of critical care specialists based out of the Minneapolis VA hospital. This Regional Tele-ICU Center is the first of its kind in the VA.

The Minneapolis-based Tele-ICU is equipped with a bank of monitoring screens that show vital signs (heart rate and blood pressure) and lab values. There is a live two-way audio-video feed which instantly connects the Veteran, the bedside provider and the team of critical care nurses and intensivist in real time. The video resolution is so fine, intensivists can see pupils constrict in response to light.

With several large monitors showing data and the patient simultaneously, clinicians have clinical data at their finger tips, which is crucial during a critical consultation.

“We look forward to providing this new and exciting technology as we strive to provide the most up-to-date, quality care possible to the Veterans we serve,” said Steve DiStasio, Director.

A study published by University of Massachusetts researchers in the May 16 issue of *Journal of American Medical Association* showed that Tele-ICU improved care delivery and resulted in lower hospital and ICU mortality and shorter hospital and ICU lengths of stay.

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