

EZaccessMD brings telemedicine to employees

By GINO FANELLI

Let's be honest, health care can be a real nuisance. Setting aside the cost, there's the burden of scheduling appointments, visiting a doctor, waiting for a diagnosis and hopefully waiting by the phone for a checkup call that may never come.

EZaccessMD hopes to change that. A telehealth company based in Henrietta, EZaccessMD is available to employers in the Rochester area as an addition to employee benefits packages. The concept is simple: if something feels wrong, a member can call for a consultation and have a brief video chat with one of the company's telehealth physicians. If they need more, the van is loaded up and a technician comes to you, equipped with a mobile radiology unit. At your home, the technician can perform an X-ray, test for strep, do basic heart exams and a number of other non-invasive procedures.

The physician then follows up, and can even offer non-narcotic prescriptions. Short of vaccinations and surgery, EZaccessMD can offer most services of a doctor's office from the privacy of your home.

Will and Lois Irwin, CEO and president respectively, started EZaccessMD to offer a convenient alternative to traditional doctor visits.

"We can make a diagnosis while keeping a patient safe at home," Will said.

EZaccessMD began life in 2004 as Ultramobile Imaging, or UMI, a mobile radiology service with two trucks catering mostly to seniors. The service focused exclusively on X-rays and ultrasounds, but with the inception of EZaccessMD in 2016, that quickly changed. Technicians are now fitted with a kit that vastly expands their ability to gather medical information. In the spirit of telehealth, it's all wrapped in a black plastic case easily stowed in the van.

With that expanded range of care came a pivot for the company, from a focus on seniors to an emphasis on employment groups in nine counties surrounding Rochester.

"We basically created these kits to

enable us to treat employees, families, children," Lois said. The field of portable diagnostics is rapidly changing. Many diagnostic tools, which you used to have to go to a doctor's office to get, can now be delivered to the bedside.

The technicians who work for EZaccessMD are not licensed to evaluate the results of a test but are skilled in taking them.

The process is simple: a technician heads out to the patient, takes an X-ray or performs a throat swab, sends the information to the cloud to be viewed by a physician. The physician makes a follow-up phone call with a diagnosis and the next steps to take, or a prescription. The process is not meant to replace traditional doctor visits but can drastically cut back on the need for costly urgent care visits.

As an employee benefit, there is no co-pay required by a member from an EZaccessMD visit.

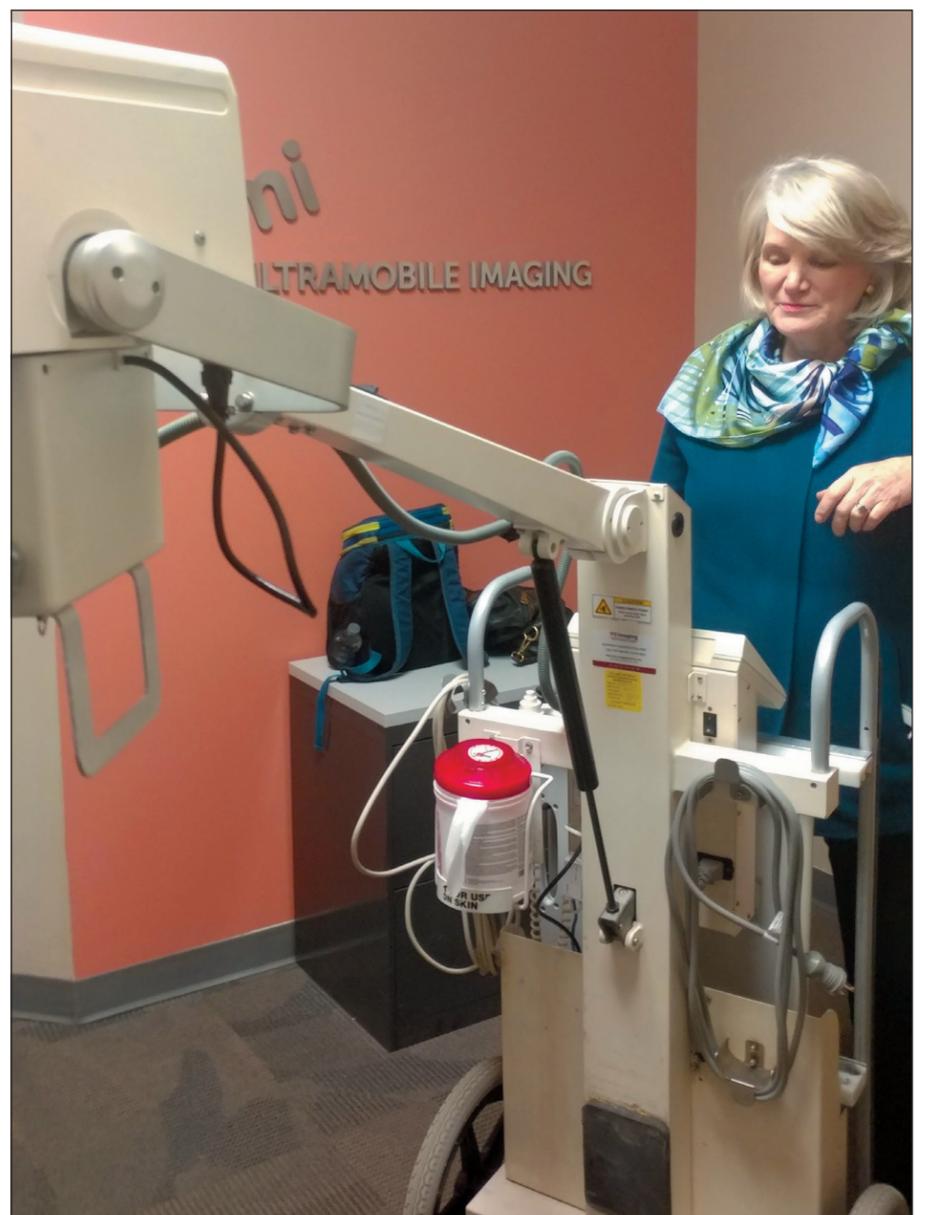
"Urgent cares are no longer urgent—the wait times are lengthy. We can cut that all out. We can give employees a benefit they can't get anywhere else," Lois said. "We're not an insurance product, but we are a certified care provider providing care at an affordable cost."

As the company's business model begins to take off, they're eyeing expansion, looking into larger markets in Upstate New York and Massachusetts and Indiana.

St. John's Nursing Home made EZaccessMD part of its employee benefits package last year.

"We have a 100 percent satisfaction response from our staff," said St. John's President and CEO Charlie Runyon. "They've said that they don't get follow-up phone calls from their own physician. They didn't have to wait for hours in the emergency room. Sometimes all they needed was a prescription refill and they couldn't get a hold of their doctor's office because they were closed. My daughter was away at college and her roommate had the flu, so she called up, got a Tamiflu prescription. If you're out of town, on vacation, it's very accessible and high quality medicine."

EZaccessMD's physicians are al-



Lois Irwin of EZaccessMD

ways available and, following a visit, immediately follow-up with the patient. That kind of access is critical to the company, as Will explained.

"Most people are shocked when the phone rings that it's the doctor calling," Will said. "Because people aren't used to it. It can be hard to get access to your own doctor, and it shouldn't be that way."

St. John's provides EZaccessMD to 650 of its employees, who have used the service over 500 times since adoption.

"It actually is a no-brainer," Runyon said. "It actually has lowered our health insurance premiums for the portion we pay and it's significantly lowered the premiums for the people who have our health insurance plan, because our utilization is way

down. We're using the urgent care less, we're using emergency rooms less, we're using physicians less, so it really has been an economic factor for both our staff and for us."

For the company itself, the focus on telemedicine is part of the natural order, as the world pushes for more on-demand services, more immediate gratification and more personalization of the consumer's experience.

"We have this wave of consciousness in health care, where people want to be in control of a situation from an app or a phone call," Lois said. "We see that in all kinds of industries. There's Instacart, Uber, GrubHub; why not health care?"

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