



# VieMed Healthcare uses tablets with connectivity to help respiratory patients breathe easier

- **Business needs** - A highly secure way to transmit data from patient homes to medical providers.
- **Networking solution** - AT&T-powered tablets using a highly secure internet connection send medical data from patient homes to physicians and respiratory therapists, automatically.
- **Business value** - Highly reliable technology enables efficiencies, so VieMed can save money. The technology helps reduce in-hospital time for patients, which can lower operational costs.
- **Industry focus** - Medical service provider
- **Size** - \$130 million annual revenue

## About VieMed Healthcare

VieMed Healthcare, Inc. helps improve the quality of life for patients who suffer from respiratory illnesses by providing equipment, home therapy, a high level of service, and best-in-class technology to enable remote healthcare.

## The situation

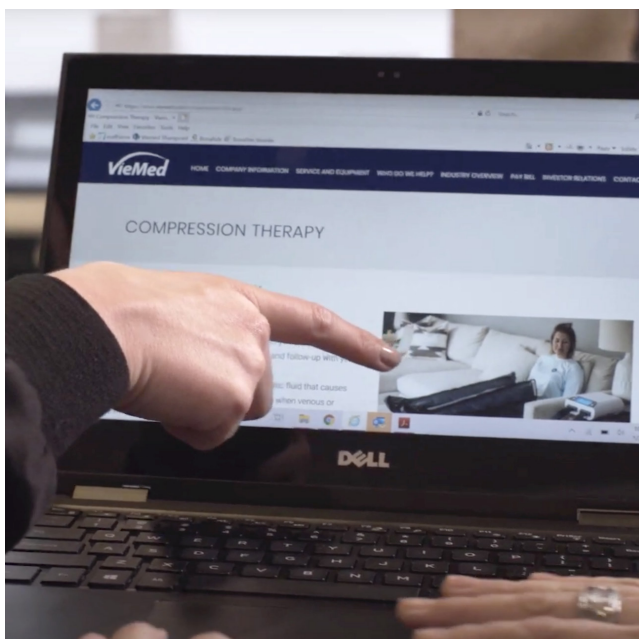
VieMed's ability to deliver high quality home healthcare depends on its capacity to gather patient data remotely and share it with physicians and other healthcare providers, so they can make better healthcare decisions for patients. In-home medical service providers need highly reliable, highly secure connectivity to transmit vital medical data to physicians and therapists to aid in the patient care they deliver to their customers.

## Solution

VieMed chose AT&T to provide tablets and connectivity so healthcare providers could better monitor patients with chronic pulmonary problems and help deliver quality medical care. Tablets are now used for telemedicine appointments, patient feedback, ventilator monitoring, educational videos, and connecting with other patients. Patient medical data is automatically and more securely sent to physicians and respiratory therapists. This reduces hospital readmissions and trips to the emergency room, while helping the majority of VieMed patients breathe better.

## Highly effective home treatment

VieMed gives respiratory patients and those who are chronically ill access to high quality homecare to help them live longer and healthier lives. The company has developed a highly effective home treatment model that integrates easily with referral partners' procedures.



With almost 25 million Americans suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (or COPD), there's a clear need for VieMed's services to help give quality healthcare to those affected. VieMed provides a solution for people at any stage of their respiratory illness. Respiratory care therapists deliver medical services, education, and counseling to patients in their homes, and the company's patient care coordinators work with hospitals and other referral sources to make the transition from hospital to home easier.

VieMed services result in better patient management, shorter hospital stays, and lower readmission rates. This reduces patient costs, while allowing patients to stay comfortably in their homes longer.

## Engaging patients in their own healthcare

John Collier, VieMed's chief technology officer said, "The company developed Engage, a sophisticated platform that lets the patient and the respiratory therapist monitor and manage their well-being." With patient authorization, the platform gathers data from the patient's home medical equipment to transmit to the care team.

VieMed supplies a tablet that connects via Bluetooth with patient ventilators. "The system transmits data from the ventilator to the tablet and then pushes it up to our cloud," Collier said.

The tablets help keep patients engaged. Video meetings with the healthcare team and daily health checks promote healthy behavior. Collier explained that the tablets also provide a library of educational videos and information about the best ways for

patients to take care of themselves. There's also an interactive social portal on the tablets that allows patients to connect with others who might share similar health conditions.

## In search of affordable connectivity and good service

Collier said that the success of VieMed's remote patient management solution depends on a reliable way for the company to receive patient data. At first, they purchased tablets from another provider so patients could monitor their vital signs and send the data to VieMed's respiratory therapists.

The service was expensive, but VieMed was assured that the local provider would select the best wireless plans to support patient monitoring. Collier explained that the plan was supposed to be just a little more expensive because the provider promised concierge services, but it ended up being very, very expensive, and service delivery did not meet their standards.

VieMed wanted to work with a reputable provider with fair pricing for the tablets and data plans.

## Delivering the care patients need

Connectivity allows therapists to conduct telemedicine visits. "It's one of the principal features of our application," said Collier. "We built telehealth video conferences into our application, and it was quite valuable for patients who had the tablets during the pandemic," he said.

VieMed chose AT&T to provide tablets and connectivity for its innovative patient programs. Robust AT&T Business connectivity helps give patients the ability to manage



**"Our number one goal is to keep a patient healthy and out of the hospital as long as possible, so they enjoy life with their loved ones."**

**John Collier**

Chief Technology Officer, VieMed Healthcare, Inc.

their illnesses at home, rather than in the hospital. "That's a blessing in itself," Collier said.

He noted that the AT&T Business bandwidth enables better monitoring for patients with chronic pulmonary problems. Instead of conducting a COPD assessment test quarterly when the therapist visits, the tablets allow patients to answer smaller portions of the COPD assessment questions on a regular basis.



“We also can send a report on their [ventilator] usage, the ventilator settings, and data to their doctors, so when they see the patient, they’ll have our data in front of them and can see how the patient’s doing, pretty much in real time,” Collier said.

Patients have adapted well to using the tablets, Collier said. “We really tried to make the application as easy to use as possible,” he said.

## Reducing readmissions and helping patients live longer

VieMed provides tablets to patients free of charge. “And we don’t get compensated for the platform,” said Collier. “It was a risky bet that we took. VieMed is a company that does what’s right first and it usually works out for us.”

That philosophy has served VieMed patients well. “We believed we would reduce the readmissions to hospitals and emergency room visits and keep people alive longer. And all of this is proving to be true,” said Collier.

The company also reduced the number of patients who drop out of the home respiratory therapy program because they aren’t using the ventilator. In the past, it was difficult to know if or when patients used their ventilators. VieMed’s system lets physicians and therapists know the time and duration that patients use their ventilators. It also provides alerts if there are problems with ventilator functionality.

“We reduced attrition by over 30 percent just by being able to monitor patients daily, versus a random or periodical phone call follow-up from therapists,” Collier said.

## Keeping a patient as healthy as possible

VieMed reacts if monitoring uncovers problems. For example, if patients aren’t getting enough oxygen from a ventilator, they may stop using it because they’re not feeling the expected health improvement. “If there is a leak in the mask, we send an alert,” he said.

Alerts are also sent to the healthcare team if the patient is not using the ventilator, the tablet battery is low, or insurance reauthorization is needed.

“These alerts allow for what we call exception-based management. So we’re taking care of the patients who need us most, versus just going through random or scheduled calls,” said Collier.

“Our number one goal is to keep a patient healthy and out of the hospital as long as possible, so they enjoy life with their loved ones,” Collier said.



## Support for continued expansion

VieMed officials expect their AT&T supported solution will help the company continue to grow. “We have great hope for the scalability of this solution and know that AT&T is well equipped to handle this to the degree that we need,” Collier said.

“Most of our plans call for further expansion of this platform. We’ll be providing analytics data about patient care and will become predictive with our data so we can tell patients what they can expect,” he said.

Collier and his colleagues are grateful for the help their AT&T account representative provides. “She’s there for us night and day,” he said. “She’s always been there to help us get excellent service.”

“Overall, AT&T has been great in helping us meet our objectives in scaling at the pace that we’re moving, and I feel very good about the relationship,” he said.



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Chief Technology Officer, VieMed Healthcare, Inc.