

Expanding Capacity for High-Quality Addiction Care

How EvergreenHealth partnered with Boulder Care to improve access to ongoing addiction treatment for their patients

Telehealth addiction treatment grounded in empathy, kindness, and unconditional support.

boulder.care/evergreen

Seeing a need with vulnerable patients

EvergreenHealth is an award-winning mid-sized regional hospital, recognized by *US News & World Report* as one of Washington's top hospitals. Annually, they have a revenue of over \$1 billion and see over 100,000 patients, with facilities in Kirkland and Monroe, Washington. But despite their accolades, in early 2020, EvergreenHealth realized they could improve their offerings in one particular area: addiction care.

Why EvergreenHealth partnered with Boulder Care



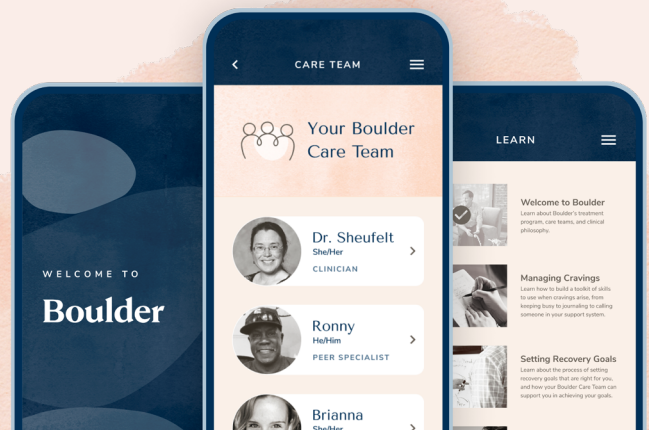
Boulder Care **improved accessibility** and speed to start patients in care in less than a week from anywhere in Evergreen's region



Boulder has **higher retention rates** than competitors, ensuring sustainable care for Evergreen patients who couldn't remain in in-person treatment



Boulder's philosophy and approach aligned with Evergreen's **high standard of compassionate care**, safeguarding quality outcomes for existing patients



EvergreenHealth already had two major offerings for patients needing treatment for addiction: The Monroe Recovery Center, a successful 36-bed classic inpatient facility for acute patients, and an Addiction Medicine Clinic for continuing outpatient care. But they recognized that these options were not meeting the ongoing needs of their full patient population for a few reasons. First, their inpatient facility has historically accepted commercially insured patients, and the need was growing with patients who are members of government programs or had no insurance at all. And second, the outpatient clinic could only serve the continued outpatient needs of members who lived in close proximity to the center. Long-term substance use disorder (SUD) care requires regular visits that are very difficult to accomplish in-person, often leading to low retention and a recurrence of costly co-occurring issues and emergency room visits.

EvergreenHealth realized that they needed to make care more accessible for all patients with

addiction. COVID-19 exacerbated the SUD crisis, heightening demand for treatment and the need for modalities other than in-person. They wanted to expand appointment availability beyond a few days a week, increase ongoing, longitudinal care for patients who were ready to leave inpatient services, and improve retention rates. They also recognized that best-in-class SUD treatment needed to be flexible in delivery time and location, as well as available on a continuing basis because every patient's journey through recovery is different. EvergreenHealth knew that they needed to find a strategic partner.

Telehealth: the new standard of care

Evergreen began to meet with organizations that provide addiction medicine services. They quickly decided that a telehealth provider could help them improve access and availability, but that wasn't enough. The team also wanted to find a partner who was aligned with their philosophy of compassionate care, the treatments they offered, and their evidence-based approach to addiction medicine. When one of their existing patients at the Monroe Center recommended Boulder Care to them, Evergreen took notice — they knew that patient word-of-mouth is key in finding a treatment provider that their patients trust.

Once EvergreenHealth and Boulder Care met, it became clear that Boulder Care would be the right partner to fit their business needs and their values.

“This highly accessible virtual care model helps remove barriers and is exactly what we were looking for to even better support our patients and community”



Eric Britt

DIRECTOR OF THE RECOVERY
CENTER AT EVERGREENHEALTH

A trustworthy partner

Boulder's low-barrier, highly accessible, virtual care model was the right fit for Evergreen's needs for a number of reasons. In Boulder, EvergreenHealth found a partner focused on compassion for all SUD patients and a non-punitive philosophy that allows all patients to return to care no matter their circumstances. Boulder is also very experienced and expertly focused in Opioid Use Disorder rather than following a broad, general addiction care model, which lined up with the most urgent needs of the EvergreenHealth patient population. Boulder could help improve accessibility and the speed at which patients could access care, with a telehealth model that helps patients start treatment in less than a week, as opposed to a traditional brick and mortar model that could take weeks and often has waiting lists for entry. And even within telehealth options, Boulder has significantly higher retention rates than other solutions Evergreen explored, a clear testament to Boulder's values and its patient-first mission. For example, EvergreenHealth appreciated that Boulder has a toxicology screening process that is based on need over rigid protocols, a policy that considers patient experience, leads with compassion, and engenders trust. And despite delivering care virtually, Boulder Care has a deep presence in the Pacific Northwest, which helped build confidence that some existing EvergreenHealth patients knew and trusted Boulder, ensuring a smooth transition.

Eric Britt, Director of the Recovery Center at EvergreenHealth, explained that the decision to select Boulder was a weighty, but important one: "Partnering with a new organization is a really big deal for us. We have very high quality standards.

"Boulder has truly become a trusted provider of my care and has filled the spot of my previous Dr. better than I could have ever expected."

–EvergreenHealth Patient

It involves our patients' lives, and the health of our community. Boulder's philosophy of care, clinical expertise, and overall approach to addiction medicine was all perfectly aligned with us here at EvergreenHealth. This highly accessible virtual care model helps remove barriers and is exactly what we were looking for to even better support our patients and community."

An Easy Implementation

Before launching this partnership, Evergreen scoped patient volume and set out a transition timeline. Both teams reviewed insurance coverage for current patients and created a unique referral code to ensure access. The teams aligned on a process for sharing medical records and the release of information to ensure all patients experienced a smooth transition. The teams also worked on educational materials to engage patients and build trust in the transition, including a custom landing page on Boulder's website, several mailers and fliers, and a co-hosted webinar. Once the integration plan was set, Boulder and Evergreen announced their partnership in the second half of 2021.



How It Works: Bi-lateral Referrals

Together, EvergreenHealth & Boulder have been able to provide support that meets all patients where they are on their recovery journey. When patients complete inpatient care with EvergreenHealth, EvergreenHealth assesses their needs. If they are a good candidate for telemedicine-based MAT, EvergreenHealth's team will refer them to Boulder for care.

And partnering with Boulder didn't mean giving up patients for EvergreenHealth, but rather, allows them to work with Boulder to help existing patients stay in the EvergreenHealth system. Patients who enter treatment with Boulder care stay with both providers, and Boulder even assists in furthering patient journeys at EvergreenHealth through bi-directional referrals. Boulder Care's clinicians support patients with wrap-around care to assess any additional medical needs and refer patients back to the EvergreenHealth system. This allows the partnership to create a seamless pathway for patients to access a full spectrum of care between the partners. Boulder connects patients with Evergreen's primary care providers, OB/GYN physicians, and other specialists or services, and can also refer patients into a higher level of addiction care depending on each patient's individual need.

Boulder also offers the advantage that patients can start telehealth care while they are still in an EvergreenHealth facility to ensure seamless transition and continued care.

Outcomes: Ongoing Success

To date, Boulder has cared for over 150 patients with SUD treatment from EvergreenHealth, including about 20 new patients who EvergreenHealth referred directly to Boulder Care without having received care at Evergreen's Recovery Center first.

Evergreen has found a partnership that gives patients the options they were looking for long-term management of OUD: care that is more accessible, available anytime, and doesn't require any travel. And the results are improving satisfaction and health outcomes for their patients, with measured success that way outperforms the industry.

85%

of patients in the partnership report feeling positive about their recovery progress

92%

of EvergreenHealth patients in treatment with Boulder stay in care for 6+ months

Boulder

If you have questions or want to learn more
visit boulder.care/evergreen
email partners@boulder.care