

## Digital Health Technology: Emerging Opportunities for Developers, Technologies, and Trends in Tele-ICU

Telehealth has been in high demand globally in recent years due to the pandemic's effects. Virtual care is more affordable and accessible for patients who struggle gaining access to proper care—whether because of financial burden, disabilities, and more.

Despite being temporarily allowed during the pandemic, telehealth is still technically illegal in the Korean market. Only "priority groups" can use telehealth treatments at home, limiting the future growth potential of Korean telehealth providers to other international markets.



Carlos Nueno, President of International Business at  
Teladoc Health

Source: [Teladoc Health](#)

The Korean telehealth market is exceptionally narrow as a result of developers not a part of priority groups. Korean developers should seek emerging global opportunities in the blue ocean and open markets like Tele-ICU, where off-site clinicians interact with bedside staff and leverage technology to consult on patient care.

According to a study from the International Journal of Healthcare Management, tele-ICU contributed to reduced hospital LOS (length of hospital stay) by 36% and positive financial outcomes of ROI and cost-effectiveness. Reduced patient stay times allow for improved patient safety, care quality, and decreased ventilator days, contributing to a cost-efficient technology with savings of up to \$11.5 million.

Due to healthcare pain points caused by the pandemic, such as accessibility and affordability issues, telehealth technology development is valued more in 2023 due to the countless benefits it provides healthcare professionals and patients. President of International Business at Teladoc Health, Carlos Nueno, emphasizes how global leaders like Teladoc have proven Tele-ICU highly effective.

Teladoc Health collaborates with one of the leading hospitals in Germany, Charité, to provide Tele-ICU services. From the main hospital facilities in Berlin, healthcare providers can support and monitor hospital ICUs in other cities and, potentially, internationally.

Thus far, the collaboration has been a success. The German government approved the services and provided a new standard of care to German patients based on the Tele-ICU. "The German medical community has validated and proven that Tele-ICU provides higher quality [of care] and is reimbursing Tele-ICU expansion in facilities," claims Nueno.

Now, the German government is a leader in innovative digital care in Europe. "And that's a great example where it really is helping a whole new industry to become a reality in the country," Nueno notes.

So what technologies are needed to improve current patient care and potential outcomes? What are some of the top technologies U.S. players are looking for?

International developers can provide solutions to the growing target pool of U.S. patients, especially in rural areas requiring tele-ICU services.

According to a 2022 Tele-Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Market report on tele-intensive care in the U.S., 90% of those over 65 are thought to have one or more chronic illnesses that require special treatment distinct from the rest of the population. With COVID-19 still a concern, telehealth services have never been more crucial in the U.S. as a solution to healthcare accessibility challenges for older populations. International developers can target this demographic in the U.S. through the proper channels, such as local healthcare providers and U.S. eldercare organizations.

In addition, this report suggests that increased access to telehealth services would help prevent the development of non-communicable diseases (NCD). These chronic diseases result from a combination of long-lasting, genetic, and environmental factors, such as heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes. Targeting rural U.S. locations where access to healthcare is limited, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina, which have some of the highest percentages of obesity and diagnosed diabetes in the U.S., would increase the likelihood of those with NCD to seek online treatment in earlier stages of their conditions.



Image source: Canva

Ultimately, the demand for telehealth and tele-ICU services in the U.S. makes it an ideal target for international developers. Highlighting the positive benefits of telehealth integration in rural areas and older populations, such as financial benefits of ROI and cost-effectiveness, improved patient care, and more, will enable successful partnership and sales opportunities in the U.S.

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