

Ascension Medical Group

2020 Year in Review

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**Ascension
Medical Group**



As Ascension Medical Group (AMG) continues to advance our clinical and operational priorities to ensure high-quality care for our patients and communities, Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) represented significant advancement across a broad spectrum of those priorities, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following is a summary of our collective efforts.

Patient Experience: Emergence of Innovative Care Delivery Models During the Pandemic

AMG's ongoing commitment to delivering an exceptional experience was exemplified through our work to create better access, continuity of care and convenience for consumers.

To that end, AMG continued to add to our innovative care delivery portfolio. This resulted in the opening of three comprehensive care clinics, which address medical, social and behavioral needs of the patient through high-touch care; and a virtual provider office in Michigan that provides convenient primary and specialty care for chronic disease management.

In March, as the pandemic began to worsen, AMG saw a significant decrease in the number of patients seeking in-person care. This shift created a need to establish new workflows in our operations as well as alternative ways to deliver care.

Communication to patients about transitioning to telehealth when appropriate, and the need to visit in person when conditions were serious, was one of our biggest challenges. To mitigate this, AMG redesigned care delivery in the ambulatory space to assist with decreasing the burden on Emergency Department utilization and organized intermediate care clinics to care for moderately complex patients with respiratory conditions.

Redesigning care delivery, everything from workflows (i.e., patient intake, screening, registration, triage) to treatment (in-person or virtual care options), required agile training of many associates and clinicians in a fluctuating environment. Non-clinical associates were mobilized to work from the home setting and practices worked with lean staffing models to support communities and patients.

Regional Testing Centers

AMG worked quickly to stand up drive-through COVID-19 testing centers and respiratory clinics in Ministry Markets across the country. Center staff helped to collect nasal swabs from those with symptoms who were pre-screened by a doctor either in person, over the phone or through Ascension Online Care.



Caregivers staff a drive-through testing center in Ascension Medical Group Sacred Heart, Pensacola, Florida.

Respiratory Care Clinics

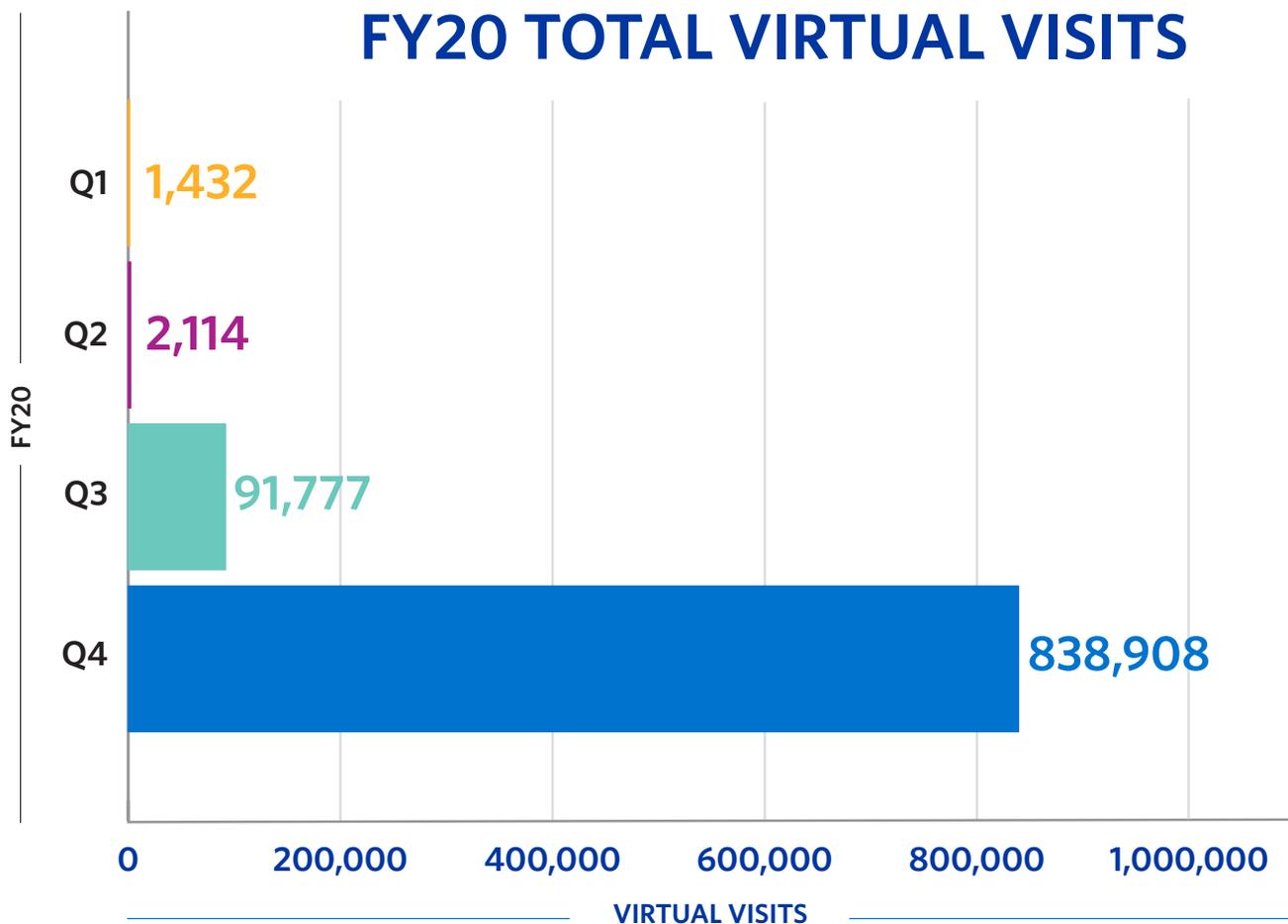
AMG also offered patients appointments at dedicated respiratory care sites or drive-through centers depending on the level of medical care needed. Respiratory sites were opened for in-person evaluation and treatment of coughs, sore throats and other respiratory infections as well as testing for COVID-19, with additional radiology services as necessary. More than 1,500 patients were treated at these clinics through July 2020.

Ascension Online Care

The use of virtual care grew exponentially, with patients and the public becoming more comfortable with seeing a doctor on their phone and/or from their home. Consequently, AMG saw a sharp spike in adoption of this technology, with **935,000 virtual visits occurring in FY20**, a 100-fold increase over the previous year.

The rise in virtual care use meant establishing new workflows, because:

- Front desk, scheduling and clinical staff are involved in more patient education on telehealth.
- Scheduling telehealth visits versus in-person visits.
- Billing for telehealth requires an increased knowledge base for administrative staff and providers post-visit.





Home Monitoring

In April 2020, AMG deployed a robust home monitoring program to care for moderately complex COVID-19 patients at home, which has allowed us to reserve hospital resources for the most critical COVID-19 cases.

This program supports enrollment of a patient with a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 who otherwise may have been escalated from an ambulatory setting to the emergency room, or who would have been admitted into an observation status due to relevant comorbidities (e.g., cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease) and moderately abnormal vital signs. Patient care is supported by our clinicians providing 24/7 call coverage, proactive care management of patients with coordination of local care management teams, and 24/7 monitoring with nursing oversight and additional 24/7 patient support with a nurse triage line. AMG has enrolled nearly 600 patients in this program since its inception in April, and it has achieved a Patient Net Promoter Score of 74.

Virtual care visits and remote physiologic monitoring have been helpful for patients recently discharged from the hospital who had an exacerbation of their chronic diseases (e.g., Congestive Heart Failure, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, diabetes). Telehealth has been integral in evaluating patients for COVID-19 symptoms or similar illness in their homes, creating improved access while limiting exposure for patients. Virtual care also helps with medication management, reconciliation and refills for chronic conditions.

Reopening

AMG supported Ministry Markets in their recovery efforts following the spring pandemic surge. This included returning some operations to pre-COVID-19 status (e.g., procedures, physical exams), maintaining certain delivery models that had low volumes pre-COVID-19 (e.g., virtual care), and developing an approach to repurpose delivery models launched during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., respiratory clinics).

To ensure a safe reopening of clinics, AMG developed new workflows for our check-in process in order to maintain social distancing recommendations and reworking staffing. Resources were developed to aid in safely reopening, including:

Guidance and tactics to support appropriate clinical care and operational effectiveness.

Efforts to promote a healthy workforce with steps and considerations for bringing associates back into the workplace.

Robust reassurance messaging campaigns for consumers, in coordination with Marketing and Communications, so they would feel comfortable accessing the care they need.

Open and frequent communication with AMG practices supported all these efforts.

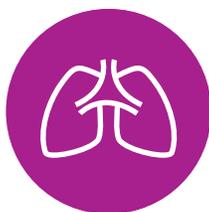
Quality as a Key Differentiator

Clinical researchers in several Ascension markets were involved in some of the many clinical trials being conducted to find new treatments for COVID-19. These include the antiviral drug remdesivir; infusions of convalescent plasma — antibody-rich blood from patients who have recovered from the virus; hydroxychloroquine, an antimalarial drug also used to treat other conditions; and sarilumab, an antiinflammatory intravenous medication typically prescribed to treat rheumatoid arthritis.

Researchers from across Ascension worked quickly to develop testing protocols and get approvals to participate in these trials. Our goal is to provide the most cutting-edge treatments to our patients with COVID-19 and advance science in this important area.

Integrated Scorecard Goals (ISG)

Our work on the ISGs continued despite the pandemic. Following is a brief summary of our progress.



ISG Goal: Asthma and COPD;

eliminate preventable admissions in
asthma and COPD
by 6%

Result: The goal period was slated to end June 30, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the goal officially ended early (February), with a **2.67% reduction rate**, resulting in **181 fewer admissions**.



ISG Goal: Diabetes;

a 4% reduction
in the Black or
African-American
population of AMG patients
with hemoglobin A1C > 9.0%

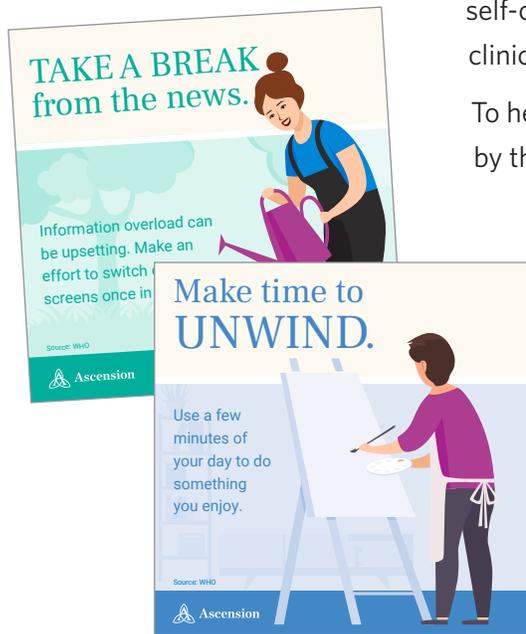
Result: Ascension had a **decrease of 9.4%** (through February) compared to the baseline (2.95, ISG baseline). This resulted in **181 fewer admissions**. The FYTD period is better than target (2.78, 6.0% decrease vs baseline).

Associate and Clinician Experience

To ensure that our associates and clinicians were supported during COVID-19, Ascension developed numerous self-care resources as well as a temporary compensation protection plan for clinicians and other benefits.

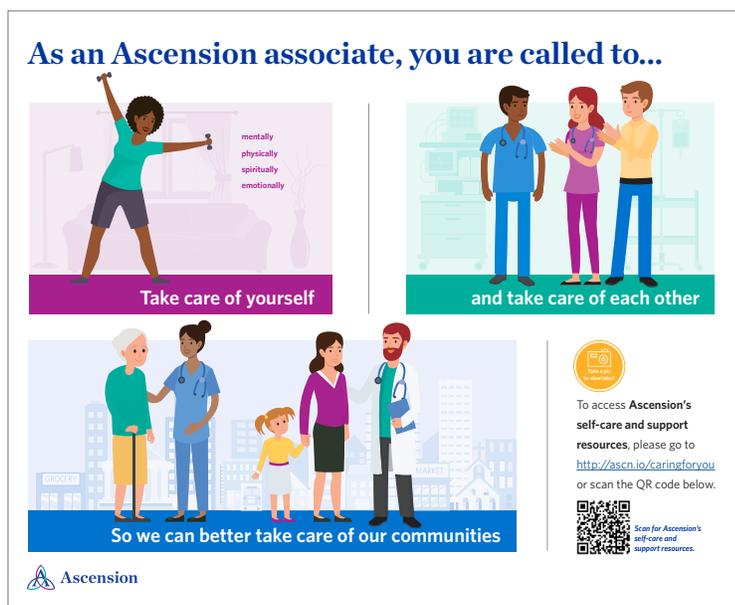
To help our clinicians and their families who were directly or indirectly affected by the COVID-19 spring surge, AMG developed a policy to protect clinician compensation during the impact period. The policy was established as a result of decreases in productivity as long as clinicians participated in alternative work assignments (e.g., virtual care, home care, staffing respiratory clinics, ED backup, hospitalist backup, etc.), and responded to increased demands for care after the impact period.

In addition, Associate Hardship Assistance was provided and helped associates with such items as groceries during their time of need. Ascension's Leave Sharing Program was also established, allowing associates to donate their paid time off hours to a co-worker in need.



Other workforce benefits included:

- An associate self-care and support website to guide associates to resources, including a combined calendar of reflections and well-being events, financial resources, appreciation resources, tools for energy management and resilience, and access to on-demand spiritual care or employee assistance program services.
- Virtual peer support sessions, where associates could gather and discuss stress and/or solutions related to the pandemic with like-minded peers. Some 248 peer sessions with 1,087 attendees were held in FY20.



AMG's Clinician Engagement and Well-Being Council played a critical role by helping to collect feedback and concerns from market leaders and sharing the information with AMG leadership. AMG provided weekly well-being pearls that were distributed to local well-being committee chairs/market leaders, and also continued to monitor Well-Being Index data and uploaded COVID-related resources to the Well-Being Index tool. In FY20, more than 3,014 Well-Being Index assessments were completed by clinicians, including medical residents and aligned clinicians.

Leadership Development Enhancements



During the AMG Leadership and Formation Program in Atlanta in January, attendees participated in a variety of activities to enhance management and operational skills.

In conjunction with Mission Integration and Human Resources, the AMG Leadership Development and Formation Program was revamped, integrating additional topics, which were deployed in a manner that allows for wider-scale participation. Enhancements include opportunities for practical application of leadership principles and core management and operational skills with team activities, role-playing scenarios, case studies and exercises designed to be completed during and/or after sessions. The program quickly converted to virtual learning during the pandemic. A total of 115 AMG clinicians participated in the cohort.

AMG also continues to develop a pathway for physicians who are interested in financially investing in AMG, utilizing an alignment model guide that was developed in FY19 to create a streamlined process to support and streamline decision-making across markets. In FY20, **1,285 new physicians and Advanced Practice Providers (APPs)** joined AMG. This is an important milestone for AMG, as we seek to attract top talent and partner with physicians, making AMG the best place for clinicians to practice medicine while expanding our geographic reach.

Growth in New Lives

Growth in new patient lives continues to be a high priority for AMG. In spite of COVID-19, AMG still completed **196,998 Medicare Annual Wellness visits**. This, and the surge in new virtual care adoption, resulted in a total of **2,667,916 unique lives** served by primary care providers for the fiscal year.

Ascension also implemented new Medicare Advantage plans in three states. Ascension Complete plans in Florida, Illinois and Kansas enrolled just under **2,000 Medicare-eligible patients**. This effort gives us more ability to serve by providing a greater set of benefits, improved continuity of care, and additional financial security to our patients, while giving our physicians the ability to influence how the plan is designed and operated to reduce administrative burden. Ascension also designed and filed new plans in FY20 that will go live in four additional states (Alabama, Indiana, Michigan and Tennessee) in 2021.

Lowering Costs

AMG continues to work on lowering the cost of healthcare by creating new models that support changing demographics and payment models. Work included:

- The deployment of ways to enhance patient care and drive down costs through improved care coordination. Part of this work included transforming our managed care model, laying the foundation to optimize fee-for-service and capture value by increasing the mix of our value-based care portfolio. Tactics centered on a roadmap for the Managed Care Center of Excellence, including data and analytics standardization.
- Growing direct-to-employer services by expanding new site clinics and virtual care, providing COVID-19 clinical support, creating bundles, and optimizing opioid and behavioral health services.
- Restructuring our population health team to adjust talent and resources to ensure a balance that is equitable across all Ministry Markets. Talent redeployment strengthens and supports local Ministry Market leaders, AMG dyad leaders, and local population health teams to succeed in value-based contracts and programs. The team's objectives are to deliver tools, resources and tactics to provide better outcomes, increase quality, and gain greater patient and clinician satisfaction.
- Deploying ways to enhance patient care and drive down costs through improved care coordination as our continuity of care (CoC) work continues to demonstrate value. We have successfully developed a comprehensive approach that addresses improving operations around referrals and physician relations. Improvement and opportunity identification is tracked via a CoC Dashboard.

AMG stands poised for the future as we continue our focus on quality and clinician engagement and satisfaction.

935,000



Ascension Online
Care visits in FY20



1,285

New physicians/APPs Joined AMG



60,000

people tested
at COVID-19
drive-through clinics

More than

1,500

patients treated
at respiratory
health clinics

2,667,916



Unique Lives
Served in FY20