



No Wrong Door: From Virtual-First to the Last Mile

How MetroHealth Uses Virtual Care and Same-Day Prescription Delivery to Increase Access to Care



Introduction

MetroHealth is a public health system based in Cleveland, Ohio that serves a large and diverse patient population. The health system's digital health strategy puts patients in charge of decision-making about how, when, and where they get care and treatment. This strategy has led to increased patient access, shorter wait times, and higher net-promoter scores.

Challenges

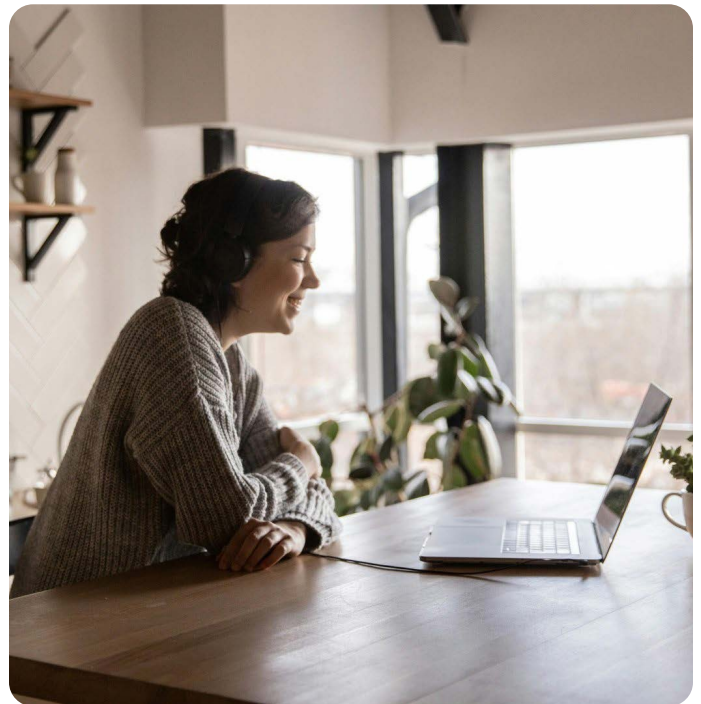
Today's consumers experience seamless, on-demand services across retail, banking, and other sectors, and they increasingly bring those expectations to healthcare. Health systems, however, are operating in an environment of shrinking margins, evolving payment models, and complex operational demands. Within that context, longstanding challenges—such as delayed appointments, transportation barriers, and fragmented pharmacy access—are best understood not as failures, but as opportunities to redesign

care around what patients need and expect. MetroHealth turned this insight into action. The health system committed to expanding access to care without compromising quality or continuity, and quickly identified a critical barrier: the gap between clinical decisions and patients' ability to receive prescribed medications and therapies—particularly those patients without reliable transportation. Closing this “last-mile” gap became as essential to MetroHealth's mission as the care delivered inside its clinics.

Solutions

To confront these challenges, MetroHealth adopted an innovative patient-centered care model built on the belief that there is no wrong door for accessing care. The health system partnered with Ovatient, a virtual-first care delivery company, to offer an entry point for virtual urgent, primary, and behavioral health care. Ovatient enables patients to develop long-lasting relationships with virtual providers as part of their larger MetroHealth care team.

Recognizing that care shouldn't stop at diagnosis, MetroHealth leveraged both Ovatient and its partnership with Phox Health, a fully integrated healthcare logistics platform, to close the gap between prescription and delivery. Phox Health's compliant, real-time delivery system ensured that medications, including temperature-sensitive and specialty drugs, reached patients safely and on time.



Over the last two years, these services have enabled the health system to provide nearly **300,000 people** with care beyond the traditional confines of brick-and-mortar facilities.

Comprehensive, Virtual-First Care Options Ovatient

MetroHealth serves more than 300,000 people annually, two thirds of whom are covered by Medicare or Medicaid or are uninsured. For many patients, lack of transportation or busy work schedules make accessing in-person care challenging. Responding to patient needs for more convenient and affordable care options, MetroHealth sought a scalable virtual care solution to deliver equitable care to its large and diverse patient base, as well as help expand its regional presence and grow its share of care.

As MetroHealth assessed virtual care products and potential partners, it encountered a fragmented market of disparate, disconnected telehealth point solutions. These offerings failed to meet the needs of clinicians and patients, lacked Epic integration, and/or conflicted with the system's long-term vision for equitable access and improved patient experiences. MetroHealth worked alongside partner health system MUSC Health to launch Ovatient, an Epic-based virtual-first care delivery company providing urgent care, primary care, and integrated behavioral health services that are fully integrated with Epic and synchronize with patients' ongoing care journeys.

Ovatient's care team members are licensed in Ohio and fully credentialed by the health system, ensuring patients receive trusted, system-connected care. Through ongoing relationships with their virtual providers, patients can address urgent needs, manage chronic conditions, support long-term wellness, and improve mental health. All patient visit data is integrated with Epic, MetroHealth's EHR, enabling Ovatient providers to collaborate in real time with in-person care teams and seamlessly refer patients to additional MetroHealth services.

Patient Stories

Over the period of a year, one virtual primary care patient built a care plan with his virtual primary care provider that resulted in remarkable improvements to his health. The patient, who was initially hesitant to try virtual primary care, found he enjoyed it right away and went from struggling to walk long distances to enjoying pain-free afternoon shopping. The patient appreciated the convenience and personal connection of virtual care, finding more comfortable than traditional in-person visits. About his care experience, he shared,



This relationship changed my life."

Another patient reported to her virtual primary care provider that she was experiencing increasing anxiety that interfered with her daily activities and physical health. A virtual behavioral health provider collaborated with the virtual primary care provider to identify perimenopause as a contributing factor. They designed a care plan that considered the patient's whole-health needs, which included referring her to MetroHealth's Women's Health Clinic. The virtual care team worked alongside the MetroHealth in-person care team to address the patient's nutrition, hormonal changes, and mental health—all coordinated through the shared Epic EHR.

24,000
Patients Cared For

50,000
Visits

35,000+
Referrals & Orders

76+ NPS

Virtual urgent care visits are available in minutes; virtual primary and integrated behavioral health visits are available in days.



MetroHealth and Ovatient are setting a new standard in virtual care by using Epic to connect patients to care that is coordinated, convenient—and integrated with their care journeys. Today, patients in Northeast Ohio can get rapid access to a virtual care provider and seamless connections to additional in-person services like specialists and pharmacy at MetroHealth, all without leaving their home.”



Michael Dalton
Founder and CEO, Ovatient.

Getting Treatment Anywhere with Same-Day Prescription Delivery



As MetroHealth expanded its virtual-first care model, one obstacle remained: ensuring that treatment reached patients quickly and safely once prescriptions were written. For many, transportation barriers or limited pharmacy access meant delays, missed doses, or even foregoing care.

MetroHealth with Ovatient closed that gap by partnering with Phox Health, a fully integrated healthcare logistics platform built by healthcare professionals. Together, they created an infrastructure that delivers medications directly to patients' homes the same day—combining clinical precision with logistical reliability to protect continuity of care and treatment adherence.

Phox Health integrates directly with MetroHealth's pharmacy systems, automatically identifying prescriptions that require cold-chain handling or urgent delivery. Once flagged, Phox's compliance-ready platform dispatches dedicated, credentialed drivers—never gig couriers—to ensure safe, traceable, HIPAA-compliant delivery. Real-time notifications keep both patients and providers informed at every step, giving full visibility from prescription to handoff.

Patient Stories

During the Monkeypox outbreak, MetroHealth needed to distribute T-Pox treatments that required significant paperwork and strict temperature control. Phox Health designed a streamlined process to help patients complete documentation digitally and ensured that medications were delivered safely the same day. This approach helped MetroHealth maintain access for high-risk

patients even under public-health pressure. Another patient, visiting Cleveland for treatment at a nearby facility, received a MetroHealth prescription while staying in a hotel. Phox Health personally delivered the medication to the patient's room, ensuring therapy continuity despite the patient's temporary location—proof that care can truly reach anywhere.



This service is the best I have ever encountered, and I'm seventy! The tracking is a great help and on spot. Kudos to this service and their drivers."



So much better than getting cold-pack deliveries with wasteful packaging. Thanks for this greener method."

MetroHealth's prescription capture rate increased nearly tenfold after fully adopting Phox's delivery and software system.

The partners became the first in Ohio to implement a compliance-friendly refrigerated-medication workflow, notifying patients in advance to ensure safe storage upon arrival.

Delivery accuracy and on-time rates exceeded **99%**, even during peak periods and carrier slowdowns.

Patient satisfaction soared, with direct feedback highlighting ease, visibility, and reduced waste



Ovatient proves virtual diagnoses can be made with the patient's convenience as paramount. We're proud to complete the experience with treatments arriving moments after a visit. By working with our mutual client, MetroHealth, we've proven that the last mile is an extension of virtual care and just as vital."



Amit Gir, MD
Co-founder & CEO, Phox Health



Set a new standard in virtual care

Find out how your health system can own the virtual care experience and grow your share of care. [Let's connect.](#)



The ultimate logistics platform

Let Phox Health ease your shipping pains with technology-enabled, accountable logistics. [Get in touch.](#)

Looking Ahead

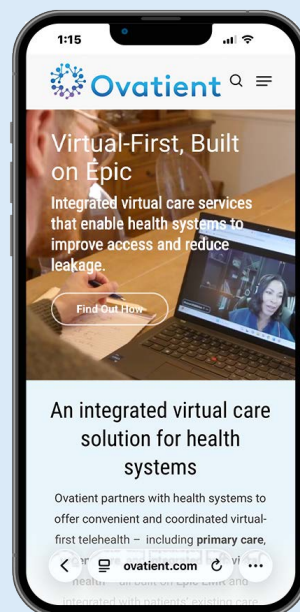
MetroHealth has taken major strides forward to better compete in a crowded healthcare market where patients expect continuous improvements in quality, access, and care. And this advancement is just the beginning.



Our work with Ovatient and Phox Health has led to measurable improvements in patient experience, access, and quality for our patients. As we look ahead, we believe the pace of change and innovation will accelerate and MetroHealth will continue to explore new ways to meet patients where they are, from adding virtual-first care services and expanding usage of delivery services to weaving advancements in AI throughout every facet of the organization.”



*Dr. Nabil Chehade
SEVP, Chief Clinical
Transformation, Innovation and
Strategy Officer, MetroHealth*



Set a new standard in virtual care

Ovatient puts a person – not just a patient – at the center of how they receive care and improve their health. Schedule a meeting and a member of our leadership team will show you how our virtual-first care model and digital health platform deliver better virtual care experiences for patients and providers.

[Request a Demo](#)

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