



# INNOVATIVE USE OF TELEHEALTH TO MANAGE COVID-19 INFECTED OUTPATIENTS BY A VETERANS HEALTH CARE CENTER.

Lisa Thompson MD, Kim Chen MD, Jess Bartley MD,  
David Leonard MD, and Ravi Gopal MD

## Background

- In the spring of 2020 during the initial outbreak of COVID-19, the Rocky Mountain Regional VA (RMR) was tasked with ensuring the health of infected veterans.
- The RMR COVID-19 Telehealth Clinic was developed to support veterans in the community diagnosed with COVID-19, identify those with clinical deterioration requiring a higher level of care, and encourage appropriate isolation protocols.

## Description of Intervention

All outpatient COVID-19 patients were called at time of positive test and risk stratified to one of three Tiers.\*

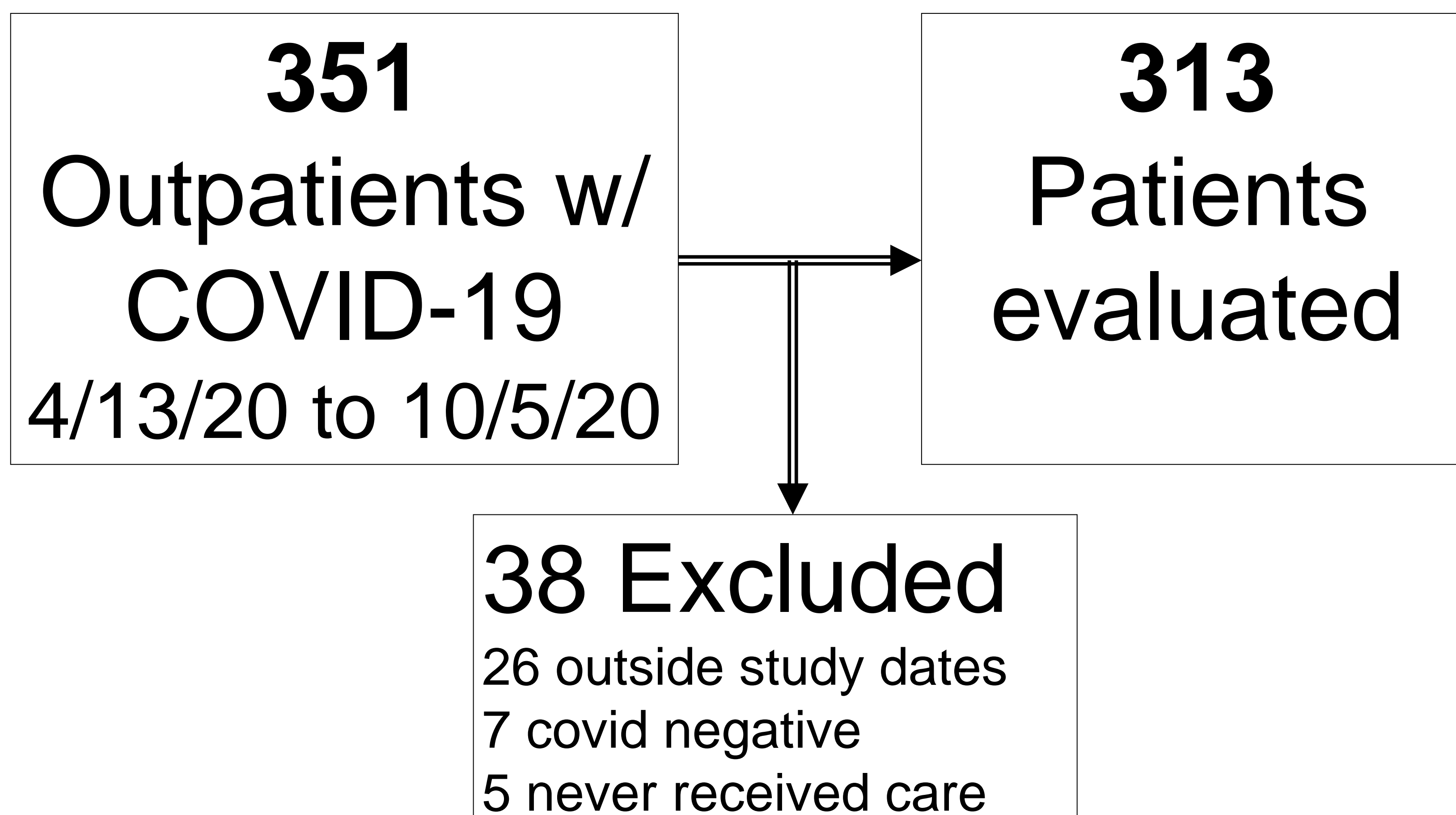
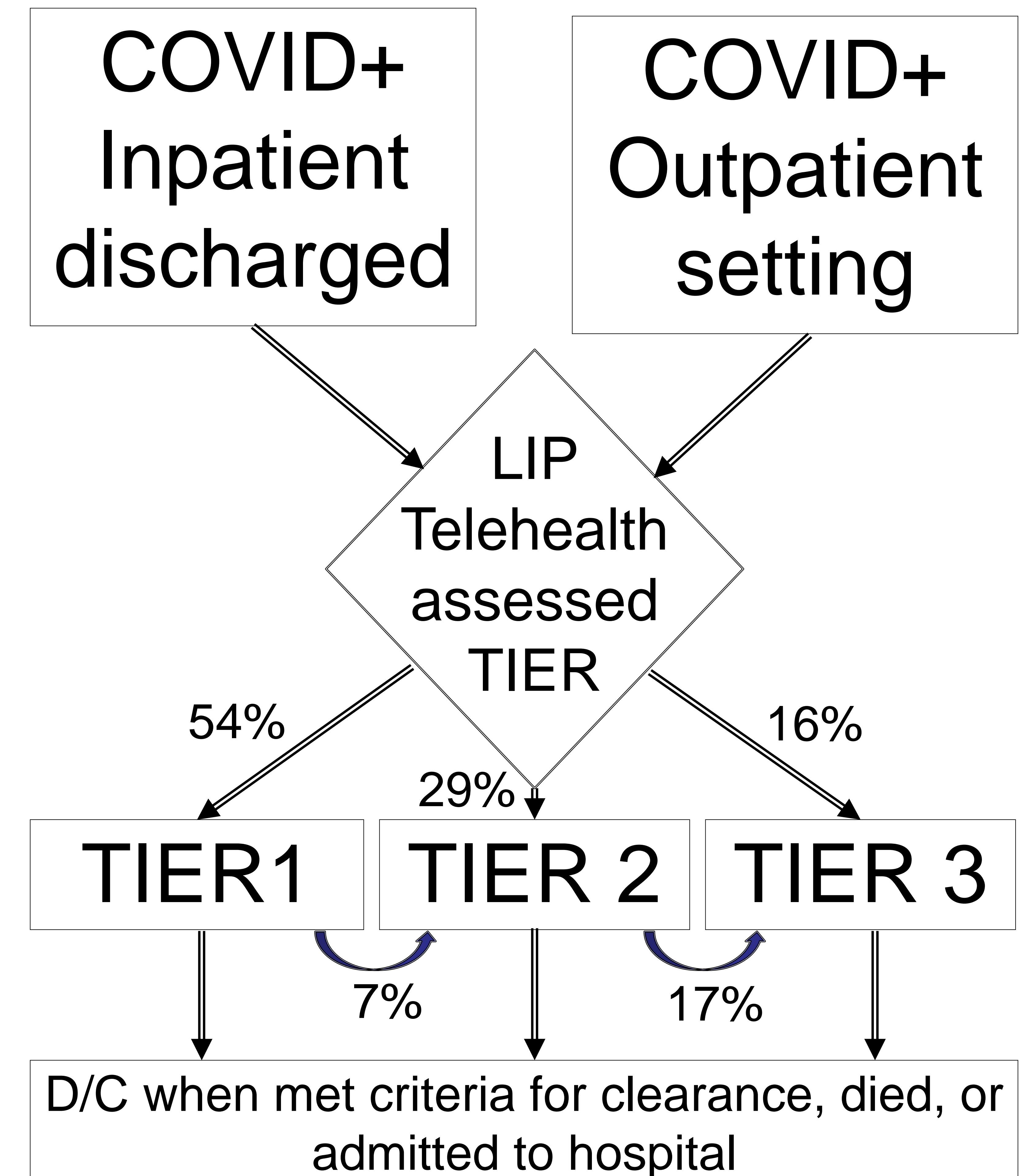
**TIER 1** is lowest risk for hospitalization. These patients received follow up calls by an RN or LIP every 3 days.

**TIER 2** is intermediate risk for hospitalization. These patients received telemedicine follow up visits every other day by a provider in the IM resident run Rapid Access Clinic.

**TIER 3** is highest risk for hospitalization. These patients received daily telemedicine follow up visits by a provider in the Rapid Access Clinic, as well as Telehealth monitoring.

## Findings

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Number	167	88	51
Mean Age (years)	51	56	62
Male (%)	87	89	84
Obese (%)	38	43	43
COPD/Asthma (%)	16	18	29
DM (%)	26	22	37
CAD (%)	7	15	22
CKD (%)	5	8	14
Cancer (%)	8	9	7
Medication prescribed (%)	5	27	45
Sent to ER (%)	3	20	22
All-cause mortality(%)	1	1	4
Median date of COVID test	7/11/20	7/2/20	7/5/20
Days enrolled (mean)	9	12	13



## Key Lessons Learned

- A dedicated telehealth clinic for veterans with Covid-19 appropriately identified patients into low, moderate, and high-risk categories.
- Low-risk patients were safely followed with intermittent telehealth emphasizing self-care and isolation.
- Tiered management resulted in judicious utilization of health care resources during a critical time marked by scarcity of hospital beds and personal protective equipment.