

# Efficiency and Innovation *Telehealth Team Award*



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

**Front row – JAY ZHANG, NATASHA MULLER, MELISSA EARP, LEAH PRECIADO, HEATHER SULLIVAN, FELICIA BYRD, JOY BAUGHAM**

**Middle Row – HUNG NGUYEN, SARMAD HASHIM, GREG HEATH, TERRI CATLETT, WRENN PATTERSON**

**Back row – GLENN MACK, CHRIS FUQUAY, JOHN WOODLOCK, RUSTY CUTHRELL, JUSTIN JOHNSON, SURESH CHALLAPALLI, JERRELL JORDAN**

**Not Pictured – ANNE CHILDRESS, ED LAWSON, TIMOTHY MOOSE, SEELAM RAO**

The N.C. Department of Public Safety's Adult Correction section recognized a need to implement a tele-medicine solution for the state's offender population. This was prompted by an effort to lower the cost of healthcare for the offenders, increase safety for officers and the public, as well as improve the overall health care experience received by offenders, who are at higher risk of COVID-19 and other conditions due to congregate living. Terri Catlett, Director of Healthcare Administration, contacted Chief Information Officer Glenn Mack to initiate and plan this monumental project.

The DPS Information Technology staff, in partnership with the Prisons Health & Wellness and Facilities groups, determined the most efficient and cost-effective way to provide this service was to leverage the existing Cisco Telepresence solution. The various teams within DPS, along with their partner UNC Health, collaborated over many months to gather requirements, plan, and implement this much needed service, which is.

With the ability to be seen by more than 35 medical specialists and 200 providers, offenders can receive care without having to be transported hundreds of miles for an in-person appointment. From June 2020 to January 2021, 3,113 offenders were seen in 4,708 separate Telehealth Encounters, saving DPS over \$2.6 million. Due to COVID restrictions, many of these encounters would have been delayed or canceled.

This solution has been transformative in the way DPS provides healthcare, while also changing how we care for offenders, including access to medical specialists. This innovative process was reported in the prestigious Journal of the American Medical Association, which reported high rates of satisfaction from patients and healthcare practitioners.



The undertaking was a collaborative effort by 23 people recognized today with the Governor's Award for Excellence, representing many sections in the State's largest department. Furthermore, this enterprise solution is also used for Court Proceedings, Speech Therapy, Emergency Triage, and offender E-visitation. Internally creating this world class enterprise solution has allowed DPS to operate effectively and efficiently during the COVID-19 pandemic. This remarkable team worked tirelessly to create an innovative solution that is now part of the daily medical processes and protocols. The result includes better and safer healthcare for offenders, real cost savings for the State of North Carolina and the DPS mission of public safety.