

NOW ON VIDEO:

The Doctor Is In

In her hometown of Wells, Nevada, Diane Moore, 65, is 400 miles from Las Vegas and 350 miles from Reno. Even the closest healthcare hub, Salt Lake City, Utah, is 187 miles away. As Ms. Moore knows, “During the winter, especially, it can be difficult getting through the mountain pass to any of those cities.”

When her primary care provider in Elko, Nevada, suggested she could skip the drive and instead go to the Cleveland Clinic office down the hall and see a Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health neurologist from Las Vegas via videoconference, Ms. Moore says, “I was curious.”

Ms. Moore, who had been suffering from shakes and tremors, had done some research online and suspected these symptoms to be hallmarks of the “essential tremors” (also known as benign tremors) that affect other members of her family. Nonetheless, she feared she might have Parkinson’s disease, and she knew she would have a better outcome and live with less stress if she could receive an accurate diagnosis from a specialized neurologist.

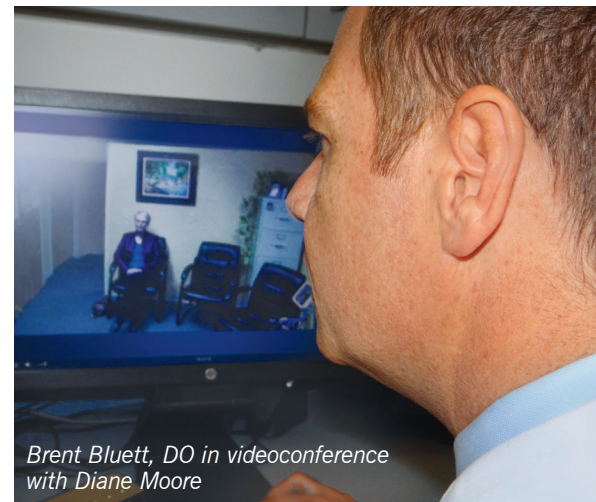
“When I walked into Cleveland Clinic’s office in Elko, Medical Assistant Tami Charters immediately put me at ease,” Ms. Moore recalls. “She sat me down and took my vitals. So far, it was just like a typical visit to a doctor’s office.”

Then, Brent Bluett, DO, a movement disorders specialist, appeared on the television screen in front of the two women.

“Dr. Bluett is very professional, has a great sense of humor, and I relaxed immediately,” says Ms. Moore. “I interacted with him pretty much as I would if we were in the same room. He watched me walk toward the monitor and then away; asked me to touch my nose, and then hold my hands parallel to the ground and keep them still.”

Dr. Bluett established a medication treatment plan that helps control the hand tremors and enables Ms. Moore to write more easily, which is critical to her job as a court clerk. She says the medicine also helps manage the stress caused by the tremors.

“I’m perfectly content with seeing Dr. Bluett via videoconference,” she says. “I’d hate to take time off work to travel to see the doctor, and besides, with today’s technology, I think it’s becoming the norm. People should at least give it a try to see if it meets their needs.”



Brent Bluett, DO in videoconference with Diane Moore

Telemedicine Bridges Geography

Without leaving their communities, individuals in remote areas of northern Nevada are being diagnosed and treated for Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases, multiple sclerosis and other brain disorders via teleconference from an office in Elko by Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health neurologists in Las Vegas.

Prior to the face-to-face meeting with the physician over the teleconference system, a telemedicine facilitator administers pre-visit assessments and performs services the doctor or advanced practice provider requires for the evaluation, such as assisting a patient in walking and managing equipment and assuring follow-up appointments.

Cleveland Clinic’s electronic medical records system allows a telemedicine physician in Las Vegas to electronically transmit a prescription directly to a pharmacy anywhere in Nevada.

To make an appointment at our Elko office, please call 775.738.0100.

The telehealth technology also brings Patient and Family Services programs, such as weekly Lunch & Learn conferences, to patients in these remote communities. A calendar of upcoming events throughout Nevada, as well as video archives of past programs, is available at keepmemoryalive.org/EducationCalendar.

At the Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health, we strive to improve access and care through patient-centric innovations that use technology and novel approaches to information sharing and communication.