

Telemedicine in County Council of Västerbotten

County Council of Västerbotten is since the mid 1990s in the forefront, both nationally and internationally, in the development of telemedicine. The focal point of the early development was the establishment of technical solutions and new working models. The aim was to improve health care in rural areas, for example through consultations in real time within the specialties of ear, nose, throat, skin and orthopedics. Via videoconference the specialist at the hospital could meet the patients and physicians in primary care and assess patients with the support of, for example, video camera and endoscope.

Videoconferencing technology remains a central component and is widely used in various applications, but also for all types of administrative meetings. Today there are 230 videoconferencing systems around the county and about 1500 employees have a webcam on their computers.

Even today, rural perspective is important, but certainly not the only motivating factor to offer services with the support of telemedicine. Increased accessibility, equal care and access to expertise are examples of driving forces for working with telemedicine and these are not necessarily related to long distances.

In 2015, a survey of the area was performed with the goal to develop a basis for strategies and routines that make it easier for the council to ensure the quality, systematize and implement telemedicine. Over 40 different telemedicine applications were identified in the survey. The result of the survey provides a basis for the council's continued investment in the area. By taking advantage of the positive experiences from existing practices and systematize the work on the improvement areas identified, there are good prospects for the council to take the next step in the development with the county's residents as the big winners.

Below are some examples of applications:



Speech therapy in patients home



Doctor visit in rheumatology



Emergency assistance at birth



Multidisciplinary decision conference