

# VoiceProducts

HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

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about

## Telemedicine in Jails and Prisons



## Improved Behavioral Healthcare

[The Atlantic](#) reports that 55% of male inmates and 78% of female inmates within the US state prison systems are mentally ill. Properly treating mental disorders could lead to lower recidivism rates, and it certainly creates a safer environment for guards and inmates. Telemedicine is more effective and efficient than traditional treatment. It allows mental health professionals to see back-to-back patients in a variety of locations, without ever entering a prison.

Additionally, if an inmate needs immediate assistance, he or she has quick access to treatment as there is no need for a professional to travel to the prison or to transport the inmate to the doctor.

Scheduling appointments is a simple process, allowing doctors to follow-up with patients

## Increased Safety

Safety and security are additional concerns for prison operators. By properly treating mental illness, inmates are less likely to become violent or create problems for guards and other prisoners. Let's imagine a common scenario where an inmate needs a change in medication. He is upset and acting out. It might take a week or longer for him to see a psychiatrist with the traditional methods of care. During this waiting period, things could go terribly wrong as he grows increasingly agitated. However, with telemedicine, he can see a doctor within hours, rather than weeks. His medication is quickly switched, and the situation is diffused immediately. Additionally, security risks are lowered by eliminating the need for transportation to and from psychiatric facilities. The importance of these benefits cannot be understated. The improved safety implications are far-reaching within the prison system.



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## Cost Effective

The [Vera Institute of Justice](#) estimates the annual cost of incarcerating a person in the US averages \$30,000-\$60,000.

Telemedicine helps reduce the cost of behavioral health. Paying a psychiatrist to travel long distances is quite expensive. Alternatively, transporting prisoners to healthcare professionals raises safety concerns, as well as increasing costs.