

Kanan Silvas, M.D.

Regional Medical Director of Virtual Care

1. Tell us about your role as Regional Medical Director of Virtual Care:

I help develop strategies and programs that increase access to care for all of the patients we care for here at KH, both locally and rurally. Our team works hard to ensure that these programs are sustainable and affordable for both patients and the organization as a whole. Essentially, I help provide tools for our amazing physicians to give the best care possible to their patients.

2. How long have you been with Kootenai Health and/or in healthcare?

I graduated Medical School in 2015. I completed a combined EM/IM residency at Allegheny Health Network in Pittsburgh PA where I also served as Chief Resident of Emergency Medicine during my last year. I came back to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where my wife and I grew up, in 2020 and at that time I started work as both an Internal Medicine Hospitalist and an Emergency Medicine Physician. Initially, I would travel once per month to Clearwater Valley Hospital, three hours south of Kootenai Health, for ER shifts. In January 2022, I began doing shifts here at the Kootenai Health Emergency Department. I have been the medical director of virtual care since I was first hired and added medical director of the transfer center to my duties in January of 2022.

3. Why is virtual care the future of healthcare?

Virtual care allows healthcare to be focused on our most important people – our patients. It allows patients to be connected with the physicians and specialists they need at a location that is most convenient and affordable to them. At current state, healthcare is tremendously burdensome to patients when every interaction with a healthcare provider requires an in-person visit. It requires time off of work (either personally or for care givers), it requires travel expenses, and it requires time to and from the appointment. While not all care can be 100% virtual all of the time, it allows the opportunity to provide and obtain care where physical touch is not absolutely needed to allow for the optimal health outcomes.

4. Why is virtual care particularly important to those in rural communities?

Rural communities bear the highest burden to access high quality care, particularly specialty care, that is required in a complex healthcare environment. They are required to travel long distances, often on unsafe road conditions, at great expense to see the specialists that they so desperately need. Time and time again this burden often is too much and many rural patients only seek care when medical issues become emergent. A simple treatable condition then turns into a life threatening or debilitating condition that only increases the burden of healthcare. While all Kootenai Health physicians are committed to providing care to our rural populations, due to the great geographical region that we serve it is difficult to have regular office visits. Virtual care allows for increased access to providers, close to home, and increased frequency to help provide the best care possible.

5. What can patients expect during their virtual care experience?

You can expect the same tremendous compassionate and high quality care that you have always received from Kootenai Health.