

It Takes a Village of Virtual Experts to Fight Child Abuse

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The consequences of failing to correctly diagnose child abuse are enormous—and a burden to any pediatric provider. Rural healthcare providers, who regularly treat suspected victims of abuse in emergency rooms and clinics, often lack access to the tools and experts that can help them make more informed decisions.

Fortunately, new technology has evolved to help nurses and physicians obtain access to experts in the field that can help them avoid false positives and take action on cases that have flown under the radar from clinicians.

A new telehealth product called ProNet TeleCAM is a [HIPAA-compliant](#) web-based tool that allows users to share sensitive data and images—such as clinical photos, radiographs, and whole-slide pathology images—in real time with a network of experts across geographic regions.

According to the product's developer, XFIN, physicians who use it have seen a 32 percent reduction in the time spent on diagnosing abuse cases due to the program's ability to generate an e-mail notification that initiates multidisciplinary team meetings.

Lori D. Frasier, division chief of child abuse pediatrics at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, told [mHealth Intelligence](#) that her organization uses the program due to its ability to query experts on potential child abuse cases.

"There aren't a lot of (clinicians) out there who can provide that expertise," Frasier says. "You need someone who knows what to look for."

For example, it can be difficult—but not impossible—for trained clinicians to know the difference between a bruise that's the result of violence or from another cause, like falling down on a playground.

"The value is in the accuracy of the diagnosis," Frasier says, according to mHealth Intelligence. "Over-interpreting something can be a huge cost to children and families."

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