# Optimizing Informed Patient Transfers

Philip Baker, Director, Transfer Center

University of New Mexico Hospital

# Today's **Speaker**

## **Philip Baker**

Director, Transfer Center, University of New Mexico Hospital

Philip Baker is the Director of the Rapid Response Team and Transfer Center and the University of New Mexico Hospital. Philip received his BS in Emergency Medical Services from University of New Mexico and his MBA from Western New Mexico University. He is married with a daughter who takes up most of his free time.

# UNM HSC

Organization Overview

Our patient care mission encompasses serving as an accessible, high-quality, safety-focused, comprehensive care provider for all the people of Bernalillo County, and providing specialized services for people across the state:

- ✔ 2 hospitals
  - 430 bed academic medical center
  - 70 bed sister community hospital (SRMC)
- ✔ State's only level 1 trauma center
- ✔ 2 psychiatric centers covering adult and pediatric populations
- ✔ Comprehensive Cancer Center AND Comprehensive Stroke Center
- ✔ Advanced Certification in Advanced Heart Failure from TJC
- ✔ Gold Plus with Honor Roll for Heart Failure from AHA
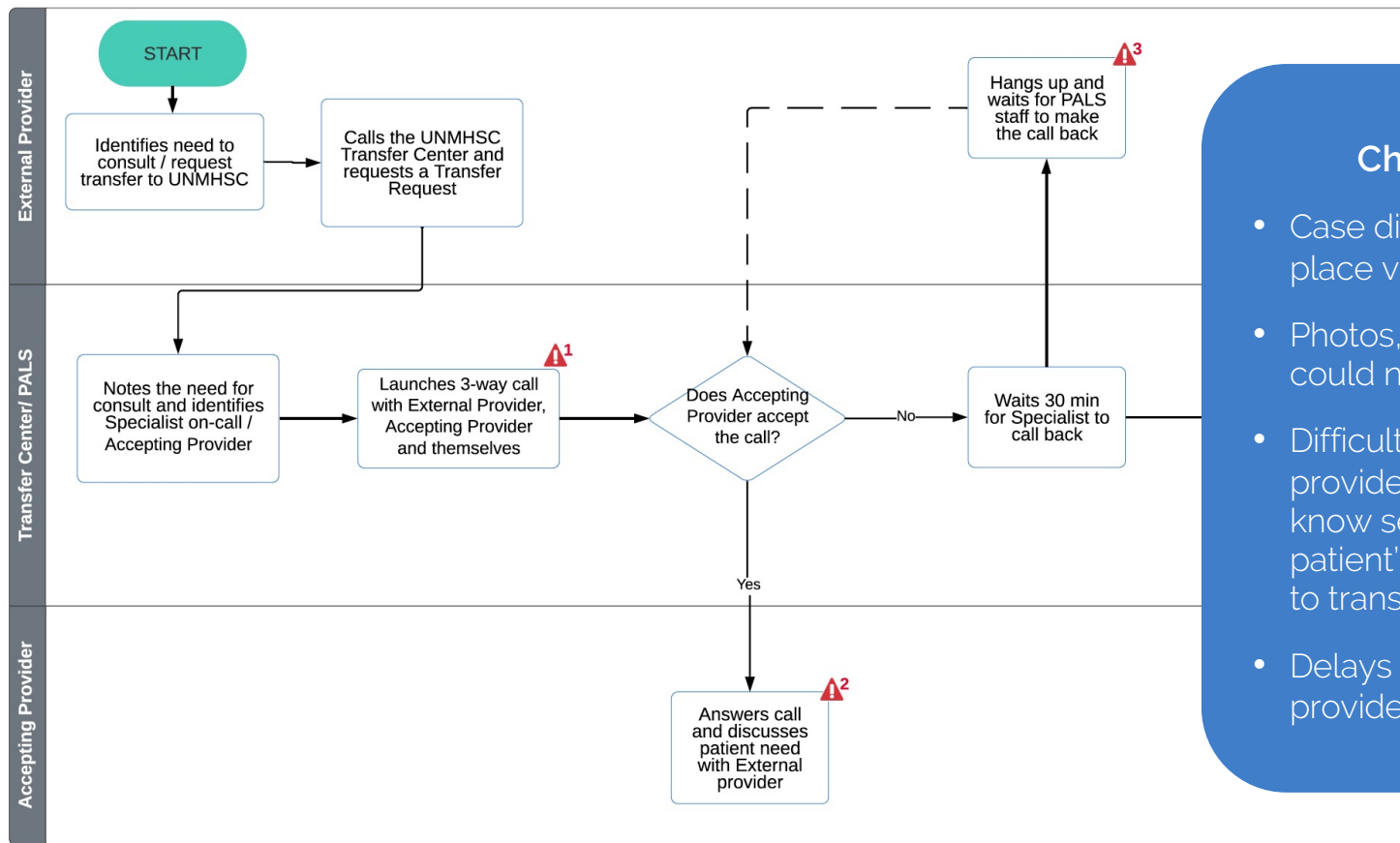- ✔ Outpatient services

# New Strategic Initiative

Increase Communication Channels
Between Rural Facilities and UNM Providers

tigerconnect

# Project Goals

- ✔ Increase communication channels between rural facilities and UNM providers

- ✔ Reduce unnecessary transfers to the hospitals

- ✔ Increase patient throughput

- ✔ Ability for UNM providers to have as much information about the patient as possible before making a decision

- ✔ Improve external and UNM provider satisfaction

- ✔ Improve patient satisfaction

# Pre-TigerConnect Workflow



**External Provider**

START

Identifies need to consult / request transfer to UNMHSC

Calls the UNMHSC Transfer Center and requests a Transfer Request

Hangs up and waits for PALS staff to make the call back ⚠3

**Transfer Center/ PALS**

Notes the need for consult and identifies Specialist on-call / Accepting Provider

Launches 3-way call with External Provider, Accepting Provider and themselves ⚠1

Does Accepting Provider accept the call?

No — Waits 30 min for Specialist to call back

Yes

**Accepting Provider**

Answers call and discusses patient need with External provider ⚠2

## Challenges

- Case discussions took place via phone

- Photos, videos and files could not be shared

- Difficult for accepting provider to accurately know severity of the patient's state – forced to transfer patients

- Delays reaching the providers (up to 5 hours)

# Leveraging TigerConnect for Informed Decisions

Evolving from Message Anyone to TigerTouch

tigerconnect
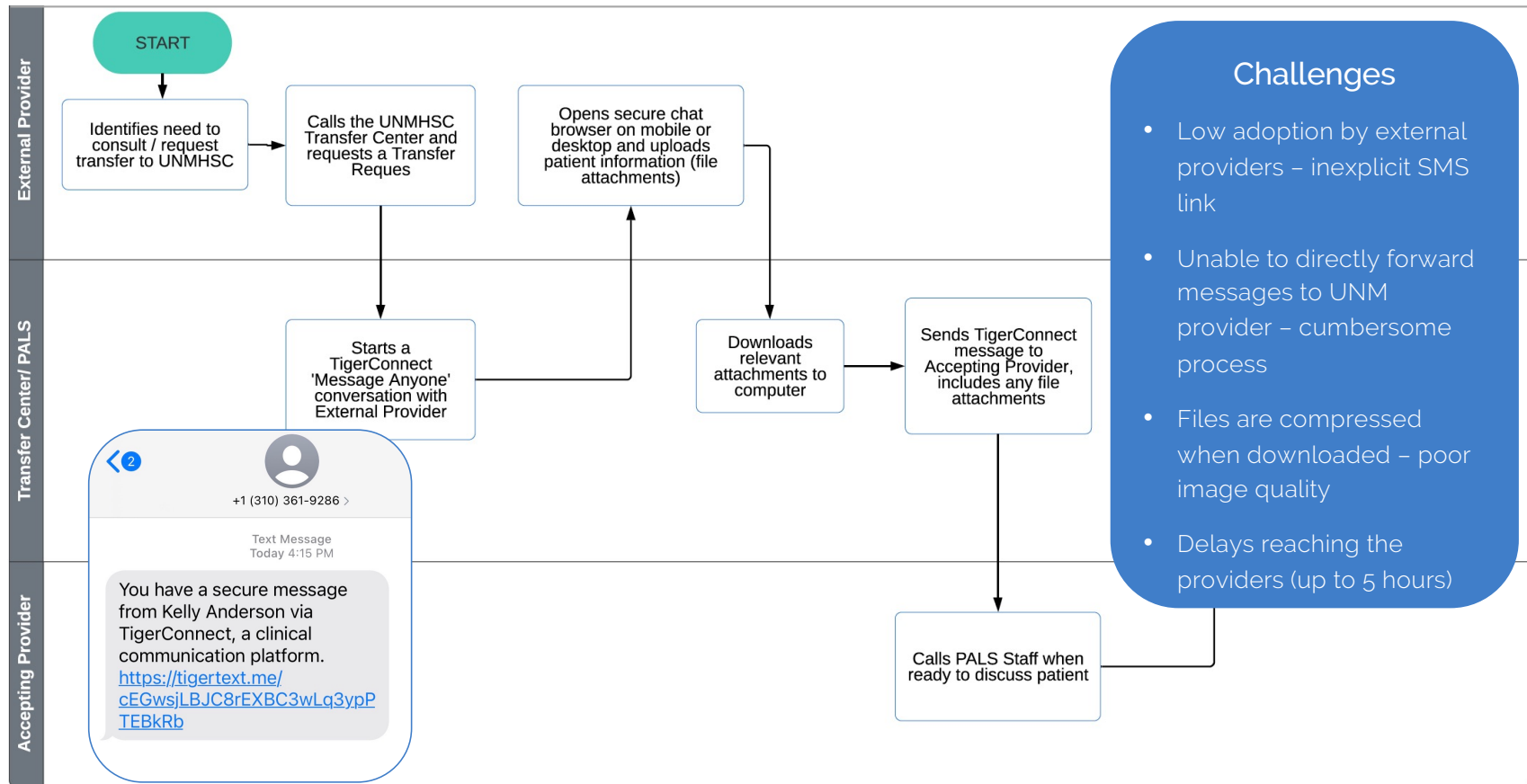
# Implementing New Functionality

## Stakeholders:

→ Alex Rankin, MD, ACMO Patient Throughput, Medical Director

→ Phil Bolyard, Analyst Systems III, Communications Team

→ Philip Baker, Director Transfer Center

## Project timeline:

→ Phase I: June 2020 implemented Message Anyone

→ Phase II: January 2021 implemented TigerTouch

# Phase I - Message Anyone Workflow



**External Provider**

START

Identifies need to consult / request transfer to UNMHSC

Calls the UNMHSC Transfer Center and requests a Transfer Reques

Opens secure chat browser on mobile or desktop and uploads patient information (file attachments)

**Transfer Center/ PALS**

Starts a TigerConnect 'Message Anyone' conversation with External Provider

Downloads relevant attachments to computer

Sends TigerConnect message to Accepting Provider, includes any file attachments

**Accepting Provider**

+1 (310) 361-9286

Text Message
Today 4:15 PM

You have a secure message from Kelly Anderson via TigerConnect, a clinical communication platform.
https://tigertext.me/cEGwsjLBJC8rEXBC3wLq3ypPTEBkRb

Calls PALS Staff when ready to discuss patient

## Challenges

- Low adoption by external providers – inexplicit SMS link

- Unable to directly forward messages to UNM provider – cumbersome process

- Files are compressed when downloaded – poor image quality

- Delays reaching the providers (up to 5 hours)

# TigerTouch Implementation

## Set Up & Training

→ Formal training provided to Transfer Center staff, UNM providers and external providers

- • Set up Transfer Center staff as practice external providers

→ Working around patient-centered labelling

- • Using the external provider's phone number in the required MRN field

## Announcing TigerTouch

→ UNM providers presented at their monthly meetings

→ Phil presented at meetings with rural facilities

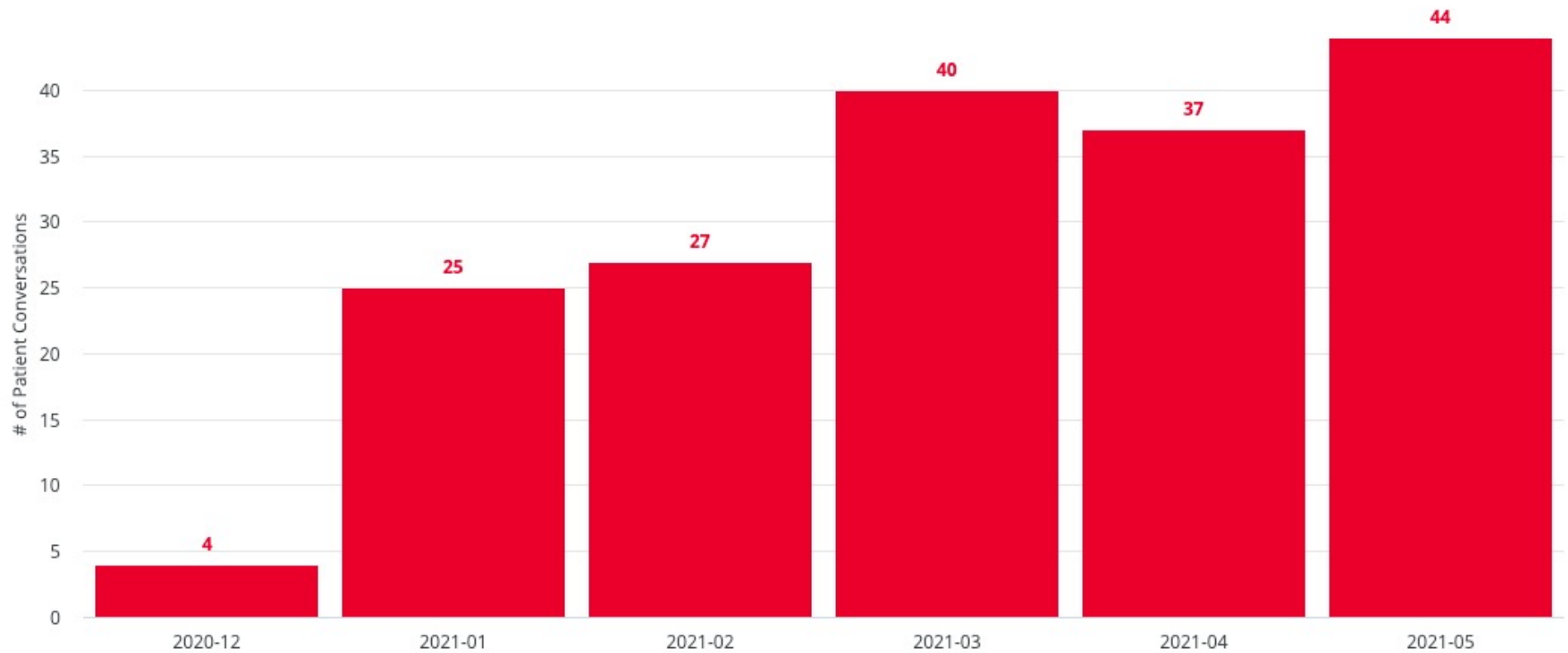- • Native American reservations were very excited to be able to easily send attachments
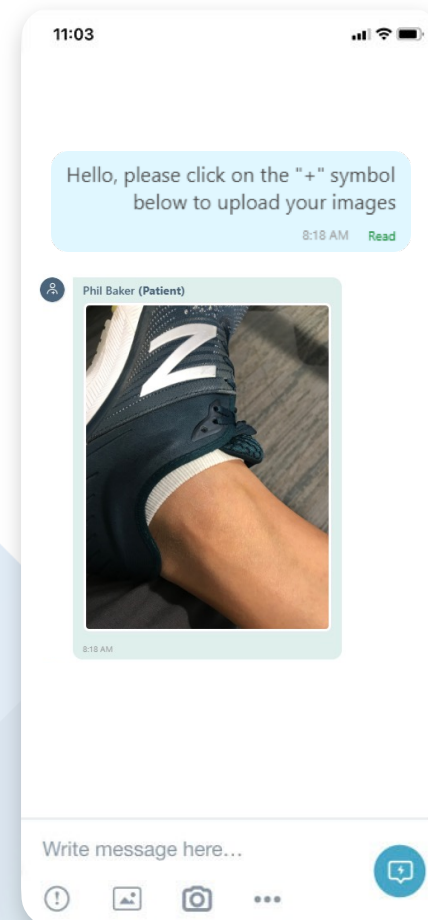
# Phase II - TigerTouch Workflow
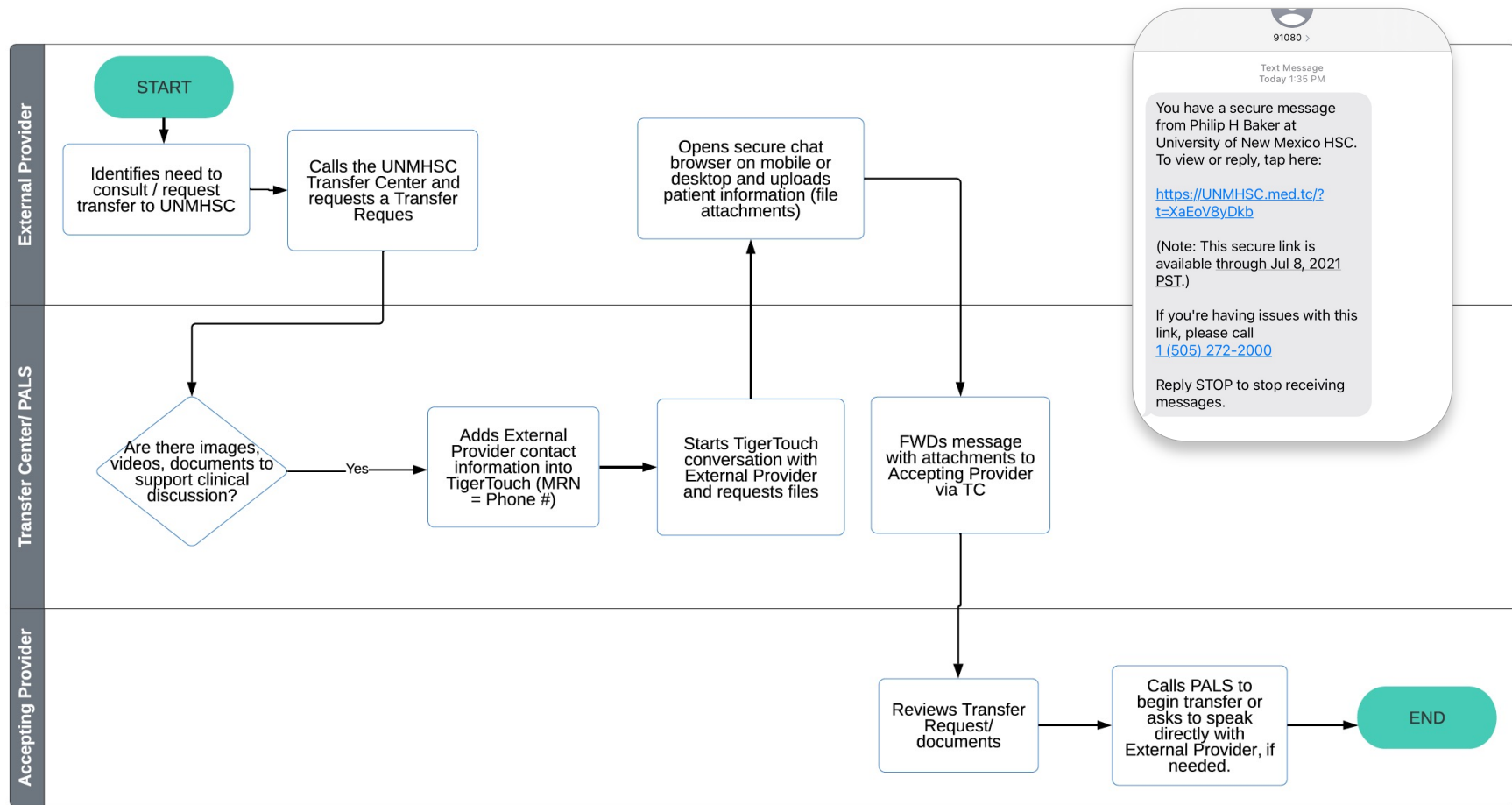
# Growing Adoption of TigerTouch

External Providers Sending Patient Images & Files to Transfer Center

- # of TigerTouch Conversations

# Project Outcomes

- ✔ Improved communication between providers
- ✔ Improved patient care while patient is awaiting transport
- ✔ Quicker, safer and more informed clinical decisions
- ✔ All Dermatology consults are being administered via TigerTouch
- ✔ Decrease in providers' time spent on the phone
- ✔ Increased number of clinic visits
- ✔ Improved referring and accepting provider satisfaction
- ✔ Decrease in patient dissatisfaction

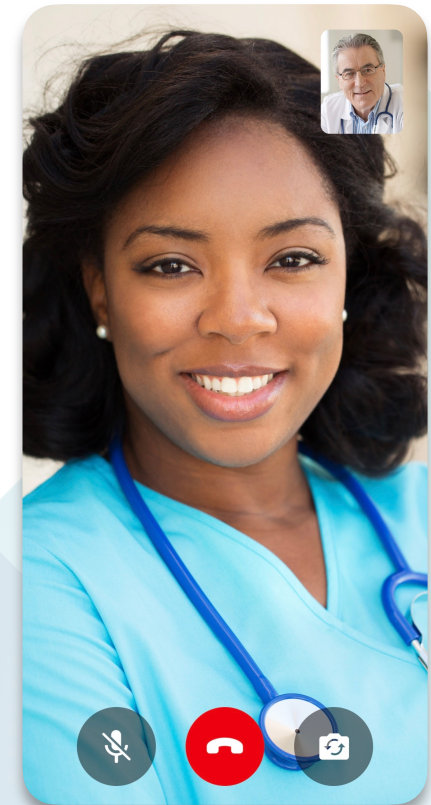"[TigerTouch] has cut out the guesswork in [transfer requests]"

– UNM Dermatologist

# Next Steps

# Continuing To Optimize Patient Transfer Communication

## Next steps:

- Expanding TigerTouch to additional external providers

- Additional functionality being requested:

  - Email links for rural facilities who do not have cell coverage

  - Ability to customize labels and fields

- Providers requesting video consults

  - Zoom limitation: can only have one Zoom open at a time (PALS needs to have multiple conversations going at the same time)