

# A Diabetic Retinopathy Telemedicine Program Saves Vision and Improves Quality Metrics

## Co-authored by:

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## SITUATION

VitalCare Family Practice operates across three locations in Chesterfield, Prince George, and Henrico, VA, offering preventive healthcare services for patients of all ages. The practice serves roughly 25,000 patients annually, with approximately 8,200 diabetic patients. Diabetes, a significant public health issue, affects 11.4% of Virginia's adult population, with a substantial portion at risk of vision-threatening diabetic retinopathy. Despite its importance, only a fraction of VitalCare's diabetic patients complete recommended annual diabetic retinopathy screenings due to barriers such as access to ophthalmologists, insurance concerns, transportation issues, and coordination gaps. This non-compliance led to preventable vision loss and posed challenges for VitalCare in meeting HEDIS® quality metrics and achieving CMS STAR performance marks.

**11.4%**

of Virginia's adult population has diabetes



***“Vitazi in-office diabetic eye exams provide the ease of scheduling and ensure timely report generation so a provider can take actionable steps to prevent diabetic ocular complications.”***

Amar Shah, MD, Board Certified Family Physician

## TASK

VitalCare aimed to close the gap in diabetic retinopathy screening compliance and provide a solution that would:

- Minimize the risk of preventable vision loss among diabetic patients.
- Improve compliance with quality metrics.
- Enhance patient satisfaction.
- Avoid penalties for poor quality scores.
- Achieve financial incentives through value-based care initiatives.

## ACTION

VitalCare explored diabetic retinopathy screening hand-held solutions and other options that utilized fundus photography. These options would require considerable upfront capital investment for an expensive camera, and staff would need specialized training or experience with fundus photography. Given expected staff turnover and the need to regularly retrain new hires to conduct retinal screenings, these options were not practical.

Fortunately, VitalCare discovered Vitazi.ai's teleretinal diabetic retinopathy screening solution called Vitazi-MD™. Vitazi-MD offers a comprehensive turnkey solution for diabetic retinopathy screening, eliminating the need for retinal dilation and specialized training. Any clinical staff member can perform the test in under two minutes. Plus, there are no upfront costs, and it integrates seamlessly in existing workflows. Its cutting-edge, high-tech teleretinal platform provides an advanced VitaziView™ camera, software, laptop and accessories, designed for primary care use. And VitalCare liked that Vitazi-MD was designed by physicians to enhance HEDIS measures, boost revenue, and help prevent vision loss in diabetic patients.

Therefore, VitalCare decided to partner with Vitazi.ai to implement the Vitazi-MD teleretinal diabetic retinopathy screening solution.



## KEY STEPS TAKEN INCLUDED:

### 1 Implementation and Training:

- Vitazi-MD was seamlessly installed and integrated into the existing workflows.
- Staff training was completed in under an hour, ensuring ease of operation and confidence in using the technology.

### 2 Workflow Integration:

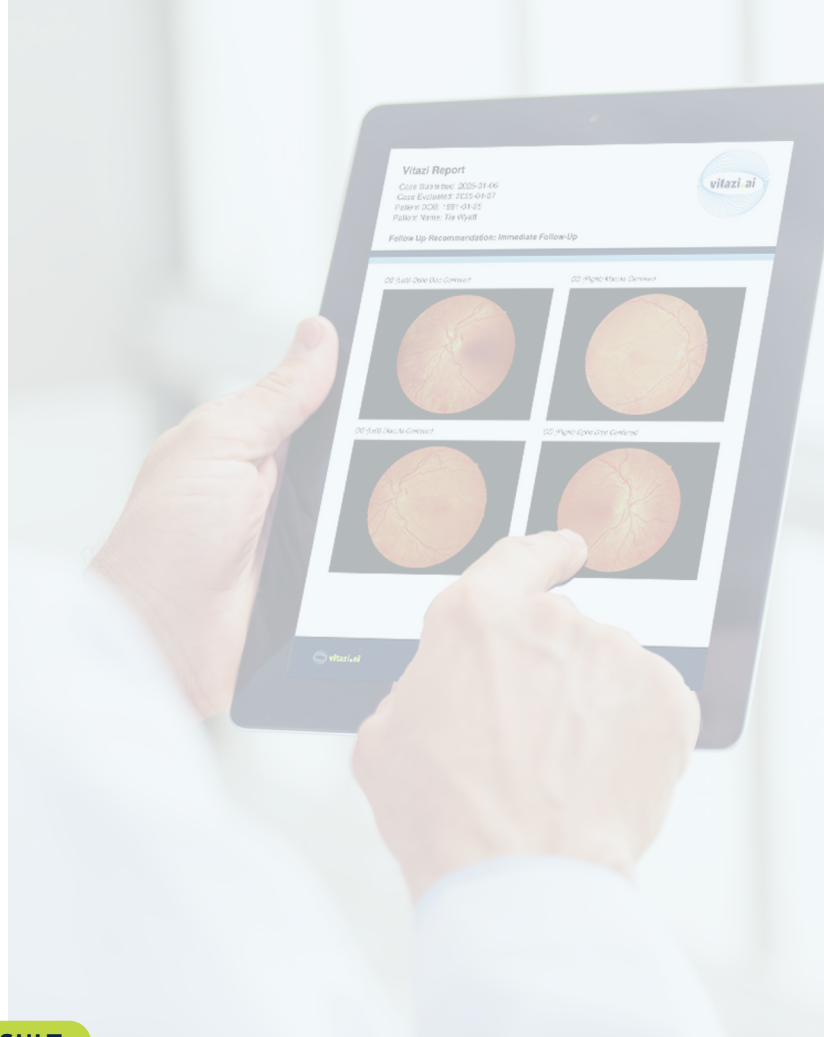
- Retinal screenings were incorporated into routine vital checks for diabetic patients.
- Clear usable images were captured in under two minutes without the need for dilation or specialized training.

### 3 Cloud-Based Diagnosis:

- Images were uploaded to the cloud and reviewed by board-certified ophthalmologists.
- Diagnostic reports were returned quickly, enabling timely intervention and care.

### 4 Patient Follow-Up:

- Patients were promptly informed of next steps and referred to specialists as needed.



## RESULT

Implementation of Vitazi-MD for diabetic retinopathy screening has delivered impactful results in terms of clinical efficacy, financial performance, and patient satisfaction, establishing its value as a transformative healthcare solution:

**75%**

more patients screened for diabetic retinopathy

**92.9%**

of images were telehealth grade

**9.4%**

showed advanced diabetic retinopathy needing immediate care

**\$145k+**

additional projected revenue for the practice

### 1 Clinical Impact:

A total of 57 patients were screened:

- Helped close care gap by screening up to 75% more patients for diabetic retinopathy
- 92.9% of images were telehealth grade (readable by ophthalmologists)
- 9.4% of the diabetics showed advanced diabetic retinopathy with vision threatening disease and were referred to an ophthalmologist right away
- 15.1% showed moderate diabetic retinopathy that needed attention within 6 months
- 58.5% showed minimal or no diabetic retinopathy and could wait for their next annual screening

### 2 Financial Impact:

- Enhanced performance in HEDIS measures generating financial rewards
- Projected additional revenue of more than \$145,000 for the practice

### 3 Quality of Life Impact:

- Freed up time by eliminating the need for external referrals and follow-ups
- Increased satisfaction due to convenient, in-clinic screenings without the need for specialist visits, retinal dilation, or additional co-pays. Patients avoided missing work and saved time.

*“My patients are surprised that this service is now offered at the office and are relieved they can just come to their trusted PCP to have this done. Another patient was so happy to know this service is provided at the office, they said VitalCare is truly a one-stop shop, where we can see our PCP, get our lab work done, see their counselor, and now get their diabetic eye exam.”*

Amar Shah, MD, Board Certified Family Physician



## CONCLUSION

By adopting the Vitazi-MD teleretinal diabetic retinopathy solution, VitalCare has created a robust and sustainable framework for enhancing diabetic patient outcomes, improving care quality, and achieving financial success. From the outset, the synergy between VitalCare and Vitazi.ai was evident, built on shared values of respect, trustworthiness, customer service, quality assessment, and continuous improvement. Regular collaborative meetings have strengthened VitalCare’s confidence in Vitazi.ai’s commitment and support.

VitalCare remains steadfast in its mission to prioritize preventive care and provide a patient-centered approach to healthcare. With Vitazi-MD’s cutting-edge diabetic retinopathy screening solutions, VitalCare is empowering its patient population with access to advanced, preventive health measures. Vitazi.ai continues to play a pivotal role in supporting VitalCare’s vision of delivering clinically driven, technology-enhanced, and patient-focused care—setting a new standard of excellence for all patients.



**Vitazi.ai is a leader in Oculomics and is transforming primary, population-based healthcare with its advanced MedTech-Healthtech interception solutions that utilize retinal screenings for early systemic disease detection.**

The company’s cutting-edge, high-tech teleretinal platform utilizes retinal screenings for early disease interception, empowering healthcare providers to improve patient outcomes and create a more proactive approach to healthcare.

Vitazi.ai offers Vitazi-MD, a comprehensive turnkey teleretinal screening system allowing point-of-care healthcare professionals to conduct non-invasive diabetic retinopathy retinal scans in under two minutes. Vitazi-MD aims to improve the detection of diabetic retinopathy in its early stages, reduce preventable vision loss in diabetic patients, and simplify healthcare providers’ workflows.



*“Diabetic retinopathy screening helps prevent blindness. Vitazi is leading the way by empowering point-of-care clinicians with innovative solutions that enable early disease detection, improve outcomes, and deliver cost-effective, high-value care.”*

Jeremy Stueven, MD, CEO Vitazi.ai

**Complete Turnkey System:** Our system includes the advanced VitaziView scanner, software, laptop, accessories and support. As a bonus, the system has a small footprint.

**Easy to Use:** No specialized training is required, making it simple for your staff to operate.

**No Upfront Costs:** With no upfront financial commitment, you can adopt our solution without financial risk, allowing you to improve operational efficiency and quality of care without straining your budget.