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**By Michelle Costa**

The latest technology in a local hospital is allowing patients to meet with doctors from 200 miles away. The Cooperative Telehealth Network in Southeast Idaho is conveniently linking patients up with their doctors. On Monday, a local doctor used telemedicine to see his 100th patient.

Dr. Hazle is one of the few doctors in Southeast Idaho using the telehealth network.

"The whole premise behind telemedicine is to offer clinical care, consultation or direct service anywhere, no matter where you are and you can do it from anywhere," said Dr. William Hazle, Medical Director of Behavioral Health Services at Portneuf Medical Center.

He's been providing psychiatric care to patients in Soda Springs, Malad and Afton, Wyoming all from his own office. It's a very special day for Dr. Hazle since he's met with his 100th patient Monday along with seven others.

It's very easy to use telemedicine. At Portneuf Medical Center, Dr. Hazle sits in his chair while his clients go on the screen and within minutes, they're hooked up.

"Mainly, what we are treating is mood disorder, but we treat the full range of psychiatric disorders," said Dr. Hazle.

Dr. Hazle said they even offer counseling and group therapy through video conferencing. I tried out this system and it really took seconds to get Kathy Hubbard, Telehealth Coordinator, up on our computer screen. She spoke with us from Malad about telemedicine.

"It has been a positive response from patients. It makes it convenient for patients to stay in their own community and not have to travel out of town to get medical services," said Kathy Hubbard, Human Resources Manager and Telehealth Coordinator.

Plus, in some more remote areas, there aren't any psychiatrists.

"We do not have any in our community so this is the service that is available," said Hubbard.

The services are mainly for those who can't afford them on their own.

"We have money for people who are uninsured, but it's mostly Medicare and Medicaid," said Dr. Hazle.

With Monday being a milestone for Dr. Hazle, he only hopes more patients will see the benefits of telemedicine.

If you would like more information on telemedicine, you can contact The Hospital Cooperative representative Jon Smith at 239-2384.