



Apollo Telehealth achieves BSI certification to ISO 13131:2021

The first company to pass BSI's rigorous assessment against the requirements of the new standard



Apollo Telehealth is a global pioneer of telemedicine and is India's largest provider in the sector. With more than 800 public health centres, 100 franchised teleclinics, and point of presence through 350,000 common service centres, the fast-growing organization, part of the Apollo Hospitals Group, now operates the largest telehealth network in South Asia.

Apollo Telehealth has become the first organization in the world to attain BSI certification to the new international standard ISO 13131:2021.

Client challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented disruption across the globe; it's also brought new perspectives and accelerated the adoption of new technology in healthcare. Telemedicine is one of them.

Apollo Telehealth specializes in the remote delivery of integrated healthcare, with services including tele-consultations, tele-radiology, tele-cardiology, tele-condition

management, and tele-ICU. As Dr Akhila Kosuru, Apollo's Deputy General Manager, Quality and Training Clinical Services, explains, "We want to reach a wide population using modern telehealth technologies in cost-effective and convenient ways. Our goal is to provide patients in the remotest locations with access to expert medical practitioners, using state-of-the-art technologies, with an optimal economic outcome."

The organization is committed to excellence and wanted to demonstrate the quality and reliability of the medical and care services across its platform. It also sought to highlight its industry leadership in developing and deploying user-friendly technological solutions.



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“Our business is providing medical care and assistance to millions of people, so it’s vital that we employ strict processes to ensure quality in the delivery of telehealth services. We invest heavily in quality programmes and by achieving BSI certification to ISO 13131:2021, Apollo Telehealth demonstrates that it’s adopted best practice for its services and delivers safe, reliable, remote healthcare.”

Dr Prathap Reddy,
Founder and Chairman,
Apollo Hospitals Group



“Telehealth has become a permanent fixture in healthcare delivery, accelerated by the pandemic. As we expand and improve our telehealth offerings, we face a pressing need to monitor key processes and demonstrate their use of data to make improvements. The BSI certification shows the world that we have the management system in place to produce consistent results from the patient care processes, and that the system is heavily focused on patient satisfaction and improvement. That should also be reassuring to prospective customers, including those from other regions who do not know us well.”

Dr Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director,
Apollo Hospitals Group



BSI solution

The organization identified an ideal solution in the form of BSI certification to ISO 13131:2021. This international standard provides guidelines focusing on the quality and risk management methods required when telehealth services are used to support medical activities.

For a hospital or healthcare organization to provide safe and effective patient care at scale, it requires telehealth to address some of the challenges and limitations faced by traditional healthcare. In order to deliver best-in-class patient care, telehealth needs quality protocols and systems. ISO 13131:2021 helps to achieve this goal by setting out a disciplined, process-based approach that can be replicated across numerous healthcare consultation scenarios.

Building a culture of quality

In pioneering remote management and monitoring of healthcare consultations, Apollo Healthcare has faced many challenges, particularly in terms of geography, ethnicity, and patient and doctor diversity. To overcome them, the organization has been successful in developing a comprehensive quality management system including the establishment of:

- Clinical telemedicine practice guidelines (long before telemedicine practice guidelines were provided by the Indian government (Board of Governors) in 2020)
- Standardized medical service delivery (consultations, laboratory and pharmacy services, teleophthalmology etc.)
- Appropriate monitoring systems promoting continual skill and process enhancements
- Timely risk identification and response systems.

The organization’s quality-driven culture has included successful implementation and maintenance of ISO 9001:2015 for quality

management and ISO/IEC 27001:2013 for information security management.

Dr Akhila explains, “We wanted to strengthen this foundation of quality standards and protocols by challenging ourselves with implementing ISO 13131:2021. But this taught us to take an inclusive approach. We realized that what worked to comply with the first two standards wasn’t sufficient to achieve the third.”

Benefits of certification

Apollo Healthcare’s certification to ISO 13131 brings about transformation of the telehealth system to the next generation, with a system of advanced strategic management. The certification demonstrates that the organization’s quality and risk management approach has been independently verified as reliable and consistent with the guidelines in the standard.

As part of a BSI pilot project for certification to ISO 13131:2021, BSI assessed Apollo Telehealth’s processes against the principles and guidelines of the standard. Dr Akhila comments, “BSI’s auditors were excellent, using their knowledge and experience to give us a three-dimensional view of our quality and risk management processes. Their feedback enabled us to identify process gaps and better understand how we could collaborate across departments to strengthen certain areas.”

Dr Akhila describes what BSI certification to the standard means for the organization. “Embarking on this journey that had led us to achieve certification, has made us realize the importance of establishing quality milestones that challenge how we work so that we can reach new heights in telehealth systems. We’re not far away from the digitalization of global healthcare that could help us transform ‘illness to wellness.’”

Why BSI?

“We chose BSI as our certification partner because they took a global lead on ISO 13131:2021. They could help us interpret it correctly and benefit from it fully.”

