Children with healthcare issues often require specialty care, but in Brazil, where much of the population lives far away from urban centers with larger public hospitals, children and their families often have to travel long distances to get adequate care. This can mean a loss of income for the parents, and that in turn can increase the state’s share of healthcare costs. A pilot program in the rural and sparsely populated state of Sergipe will use Cisco’s collaboration and cloud technology to help improve access to pediatric specialists and, at the same time, help care teams improve the quality of care.

By improving access to specialized pediatric care, the goal of the Sergipe advanced clinical collaboration and Telemedicine pilot is to help improve the quality of care for children with common and rare diseases.

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**Networks**

- **Human Networks:** Care providers at hospitals and family clinics in Aracaju, Lagarto, and Tobias Barreto, the UFS Medical School, children, families
- **Technology Networks:** Cisco TelePresence®, cloud computing, network applications, Cisco WebEx®, and Cisco Jabber® collaboration technologies

**Why Sergipe?**

This small state, underserved for children’s healthcare specialties, has expertise and willing champions to help drive transformation and will serve as a model for other states to follow.

- **0 Pediatric Subspecialists**
  - are on staff at family health clinics in Tobias Barreto and Lagarto, so children must be served in other locations

- **100% of Municipalities**
  - are covered by family health teams who reach 84% of the state population¹ (4th best coverage in the country), so Sergipe is an excellent place to drive innovation with virtualized access to specialized care

- **1 Medical University**
  - in Sergipe, established in 2009 as a start-of-the-art facility, will be the site for core infrastructure and a source of continuing medical education services

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¹Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
²Brazil Ministry of Health
The Issue
Brazil has a publicly funded health program, called Universal Health System (SUS), which includes roughly 6,500 hospitals, mostly in urban areas, and about 34,185 family health teams that cover 95 percent of municipalities. The public hospitals often have little or no infrastructure for information and communications technology (ICT), and the family health clinics are not always well integrated with public hospitals or medical centers of excellence. Also, 36 percent of the population lives in the North and Northeast, but pediatric specialists are concentrated in cities in the South, where there are, on average, four times as many doctors per capita.

Human Networks
The Cisco Connected Healthy Children program in Brazil combines the efforts of care providers, the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), members of the Ministry of Health, and Cisco networking experts to help improve the quality of care for children. The Brazilian government has made it a top priority to improve the quality and accessibility of care for its citizens, and children’s healthcare is a primary focus of Cisco’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. Regular medical care has been shown to allow early diagnosis and treatment, especially for chronic diseases, and can significantly improve mortality rates for children under age five. Poor health causes developmental delays, affecting children’s ability to learn or reach their full potential, and sick children exact a heavy toll from parents and families as adults are drawn away from jobs.

Technology Networks
The pilot program in Sergipe will leverage the Cisco TelePresence® videoconferencing service, and network-based collaboration technologies such as Show and Share®, WebEx®, and Jabber®. These technologies will be used to connect patients at family health clinics to specialists in larger medical centers, so children can see a far-away doctor without leaving their own municipality. These technologies will also connect clinicians in remote areas to experts and content at university sites and other centers of excellence. Being able to collaborate with offsite specialists and having access to continuing medical education can help increase the knowledge and training of local care teams and improve their decision-making.

Impact
The goal of the Sergipe pilot, which builds on best practices from similar programs around the world, is to help improve the quality of care for children with common and rare diseases, and could establish the Latin American hub of an international children’s healthcare network.

More Information
To learn more about Cisco and the Connected Healthy Children project in Brazil, please visit: csr.cisco.com

*Brazil Ministry of Health
*Census 2010, IBGE
*World Health Organization