FORHP’s Office for the Advancement of Telehealth

Telehealth in Rural Communities

January 15, 2020
2:50 – 3:50PM
Concurrent Breakout Session C

Carlos Mena, MS
Public Health Analyst, Office for the Advancement of Telehealth (OAT)
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
What’s Telehealth?

The use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration.

Technologies include:
• Internet
• Videoconferencing
• Store-and-forward imaging
• Streaming media
• Terrestrial and wireless communications
Current Telehealth Activities in HRSA

2019 Activities and Awards

• Currently over 1,300 HRSA awards include a telehealth component
• 50 states and 8 federal districts/territories have awards
• Telehealth activities include supporting distance learning, workforce, direct clinical care, infrastructure, and research
Increasing Access Through Telehealth

More than 27 million people – 1 in 12 people across the United States – rely on a HRSA-funded health center for care, including:

- **1 in 9** children
- **1 in 5** rural residents
- **1 in 3** living in poverty

**About 3.5 million** publicly housed
**Nearly 1.4 million** homeless
**Nearly 1 million** agricultural workers
**More than 355,000** veterans
**More than 800,000** served at school-based health centers

Source: Uniform Data System, 2017
Increasing Access Through Telehealth – 2017 Data

Health Center Telehealth Services

600 of the 1,373 health centers provided services using telehealth technology (44%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Awardees</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telehealth Network Grant Program</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse Treatment Network Grant Program</td>
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<td>Evidence-Based Telebehavioral Health Network Program</td>
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<td>Telehealth Resource Centers</td>
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<td>Telehealth-Focused Rural Health Research Center</td>
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<td>Licensure Portability Grant Program (New awards 2019)</td>
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</table>
HRSA Funded Telehealth Resource Centers

TRC’s have a mission to serve as a focal point for advancing the effective use of telehealth and support access to telehealth services in rural and underserved communities.
Telehealth Resource Centers Services

• Provide technical assistance, individual consultation, training, and support for healthcare providers and entities planning or providing telehealth services

• Disseminate information or research findings related to telehealth services

• Heavy online web presence – www.telehealthresourcecenters.org

• Monthly National Webinars

• Provide presentations at conferences for rural and underserved stakeholders

• Support effective collaboration among other TRCs
Telehealth Resource Centers Services Continued

- Conduct evaluations to determine the best utilization of telehealth technologies
- Conduct organizational telehealth assessments
- Implement special projects and studies
- Select technologies, platforms, and purchasing options
- Assess available wireless and broadband strengths
- Understand telehealth regulations, reimbursement models, and parity laws in states
Authority: Section 330I(d)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254c-14), as amended; P.L. 114-53

“(1) TELEHEALTH NETWORK GRANTS.—The Director may, in carrying out the telehealth network grant program referred to in subsection (b), award grants to eligible entities for projects to demonstrate how telehealth technologies can be used through telehealth networks in rural areas, frontier communities, and medically underserved areas, and for medically underserved populations, to—

(A) expand access to, coordinate, and improve the quality of health care services;
(B) improve and expand the training of health care providers; and
(C) expand and improve the quality of health information available to health care providers, and patients and their families, for decision making.
SB-TNGP - History

• Four Year Project Period: September 1, 2016 – August 30, 2020
  o Currently in Y4 (9/1/19 – 8/31/20)

• 21 recipients working across 19 states:
  o Two recipients in New Mexico*:
    ➢ Univ. of New Mexico
    ➢ Ben Archer Health Center
  o Two recipients in Virginia*:
    ➢ University of Virginia
    ➢ Bay River’s Telehealth Alliance
  o One Tribal recipient:
    ➢ Fort Peck & Assiniboine Sioux Tribe (MT)

• Two recipients prime scope is Project ECHO*:
  o Community Health Center, Inc.
  o Kennedy Krieger Institute

* No duplication of originating sites
## SB-TNGP - History

### TELEHEALTH NETWORK GRANT PROGRAM (21 RECIPIENTS) -- Project Period (PP) 9/1/2016 - 8/31/2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECIPIENT NAME</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>GRANT #</th>
<th>BP1 Award Amount</th>
<th>BP2 Award Amount</th>
<th>BP3 Award Amount</th>
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**Total**:
$6,286,264.00, $6,240,582.00, $6,242,829.00, $6,246,073.00
HRSA’s Telehealth Network Grant Program

Telemedicine in Schools

States highlighted in the map have authorized Medicaid reimbursement for telemedicine services provided to school children.

21 Telehealth Network recipients – States in blue

Source: American Telemedicine Association, January 2016, and State level reporting
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Program’s Current Activities – Accomplishments:

2018 School Based Health Alliance annual meeting (Indianapolis, IN)
Program’s Current Activities – Challenges:

• **Reimbursement**

• **Recruitment, Retention, and Behavioral Health/Mental Health:**
  o BH/MH: highest need and demand for all schools in TNGP’s 22 states
  o Lack of qualified providers:
    ➢ Dieticians, Social Workers, Therapists, Counselors, NP’s, RN’s, Tele-presenters, Coordinators
    • Wisconsin – Currently takes about 5 months to see a BH provider with PCP referral.
    ➢ Delays in hiring = Delays in successful project implementation.
  o Turnover:
    ➢ Demand > Workforce Capacity
    ➢ Low wages
Program’s Current Activities – Challenges Continued 1:

**Broadband Connectivity**
- 53% of rural Americans lack access to benchmark service (25Mbps/3Mbps)
  - **Montana ranks #1 and Arkansas ranks #3 for worst Broadband**

**Licensure:**
- Many states require out-of-state clinicians providing telehealth services to be licensed in the state where the patient resides
- Credentialing and privileging
Program’s Current Activities – Challenges Continued 2:

**Privacy & Security**
- FERPA Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 *(FERPA)* is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.
- No integration of data between school and hub site due to FERPA and HIPAA
  - No access to data like absenteeism

**Stakeholder/Partnership changes:**
- School District/County Superintendent changes
- Re-education of project to Executive Leaders = Implementation delays
FORHP’s Rural Telehealth Research Center (RTRC)

- Evaluation study began in September 2016.
- RTRC supported under the FORHP Rural Health Research Cooperative Agreement.
- Research partners: University of Iowa, University of North Carolina, and University of Southern Maine.
## HRSA’s Rural Telehealth Research Center (RTRC)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Number of Measures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted clinical measures (N= 17)</td>
<td>Asthma</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Behavioral Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted clinical measures (N= 17)</td>
<td>Diabetes</td>
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<td>Non-clinical measures (N = 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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Questions?