Telehealth – Using Collaboration and Technology To Provide Access To Care

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Finger Lakes Community & Migrant Health – a 501c3, Article 28 (NY) community-based organization and a federally qualified Community/Migrant Health Center system, as well as a Migrant Voucher Program.

Admin Office: Penn Yan, NY

Sites: Sodus (Wayne), Geneva (Ontario), Port Byron (Cayuga), Penn Yan (Yates), Bath (Steuben), Newark (Wayne), Ovid (Seneca) late 2010
100+ FLMHCP VOUCHER SITES IN 40 OF THE 62 COUNTIES IN NY STATE
Responsibility

FLCMH is responsible for:

- Implementation & management of primary medical, dental and behavioral health sites
- Increasing provider participation across the State
- Implementing DV, Mental Health & Substance Abuse programs for a diverse patient demographic
- Inspiring regional round-table coalition groups, among numerous health-related initiatives
Scope of Services

- Comprehensive primary medical, dental, and behavioral health services, either directly through the 6 FLCMH-run health centers, or through its 161 Voucher Site partners in 42 counties.

- Mobile Medical and Portable Dental Programs

- School-based Dental Services

- Other services include:
  - Enabling Services (Interpretation, Transport, & Case Management)
  - HIV Specialist at our sites
  - Suboxone Treatment program offered on site
  - Communicable Diseases Screening (STDs, TB)
  - Family Planning Services (Title X)
  - Medicaid/Child Health Plus/FPBP Enrollment
  - Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services
Challenges in Service Delivery

- Cultural and language barriers in accessing care outside of FLCMH health center sites
- Lack of availability of providers in rural areas
- Distance traveled to seek health care
- Coordination of access to specialty care
- Costs and liability issues related to enabling services provided to patients
- Education & training for providers and case-workers
Leveraging Health Information Technology (HIT)

- Telemedicine

- EMR & Practice Management Systems
TELEMEDICINE

Telemedicine generally refers to the provision of clinical services from a distance.

The Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Science defines telemedicine as “the use of electronic information and communication technologies to provide and support health care when distance separates the participants.”

TELEHEALTH

Telehealth refers to a broader scope of services that includes telemedicine, but also includes other services that can be provided remotely using communication technologies. The Office for the Advancement of Telehealth describes telehealth as including telemedicine and a variety of other services.
Telehealth Program Development in NYS

Telemedicine for specialty care:
- Counseling (LCSW’s)
- Pediatric Dentistry
- Dermatology
- Psychiatry

Distance Learning & Education
- Staff Development & Training
- Provider In-service presentations
- Chronic Disease Management Outreach

Enabling Services
- Interpreter Services
- Outreach Services
- Administrative Coordination
Leveraging Health Information Technology (HIT)

Telehealth Program Development – a 3-layer strategy

- Layer 1: Broadband/Internet Connectivity
- Layer 2: Telehealth infrastructure and end-user equipment
- Layer 3: Telehealth Program Development and Clinical and Educational Applications
Telehealth Program Development

FUNDING

- Layer 1: Broadband – FCC Rural Healthcare Broadband Funds & FCC Rural Universal Services Funds. Almost every State has an FCC project!

- Layer 2: Infrastructure and end-user equipment – USDA Telemedicine Grant, NY State grants, ARRA funds

- Layer 3: Program Development and Clinical and Educational Applications – HRSA Network Development Grant, NY State funds, ARRA funds
Telehealth Program Development
FLCMH Grant Funding Successes

- **Layer 1: Broadband** – Partner in the WNY Rural Broadband Healthcare Network ($6M grant awarded to the WNY Rural Broadband Healthcare Network FCC funding)


- **Layer 3:** Program Development and Clinical and Educational Applications – HRSA Network Development Grant - $540K over 3 years

- HRSA funding for National Telehealth Network (HCCN)
Layer 1: Broadband/Internet Connection

- Reviewed the broadband speeds at our administrative office and clinical sites.

- Upgraded services to Time Warner Business Class with a minimum of 1 Megabit uplink connection

- We now have fiber (20 mgbs) at our sites through FCC funding. If you don’t have FCC funding available, check out the Universal Service Fund at:
Telehealth Program Development

Building the Program

Layer 2: Telemedicine Equipment

- Set up evaluation trials for the telemedicine equipment

- Submitted and secured grant funding for equipment purchase to build infrastructure (servers, Codian bridge)

- Procured the telemedicine diagnostic equipment needed after staff used and approved them during trials

- Installed infrastructure and end-point systems

- Trained champion health center staff on equipment use
Layer 3: Program Development and Clinical and Educational Applications

- Hired Director and Clinical Specialist for the Telemedicine Program
- Developed partnerships with Dental, Mental Health and Dermatology Specialists with contracts for the scope of services provided
- Developed protocols and resource guides for each specialty
- Identified roles and responsibilities for program support staff
- Provided training for program personnel
Typical Telemedicine System in Our Clinics

- Telephonic Stethoscope
- General Exam Camera
- Video Codec with LCD Monitor
- Dental Intraoral Camera
- Electronic Medical Record (EMR)
- ENT Scope
Teledentistry Consultation
Successes to date...

- Children needing pediatric dental surgery now only 1 visit to urban surgical center, not 4. Under 60 days from diagnosis to completed treatment plan.

- Patients seeing our LCSW can come back to the health center, where they are comfortable, and have a tele-visit with their Psychiatrist to help manage medications and treatment.

- Dermatology Visits using “store and forward”

- Learning opportunities for our providers when they connect via video with expert specialists

- Incredible opportunities for distance learning.
  - Training by NCFH for our Board of Directors, Folk Medicine, etc.
  - Trainings at regional conferences by national speakers
  - New partnerships with others on the network, shared resources
  - Patients love it!!! (Per patient satisfaction forms)
Telehealth Program Development Challenges

- Lack of consistent telemedicine reimbursement policies between Federal, State and private payers

- Difficulty in developing clinical and staff champions within the program, must see the benefits of the program for patients.

- Lack of State-supported Telemedicine Infrastructure in NY

- Seamless integration of Layer 1 – Broadband, Layer 2 – Systems & Equipment and Layer 3 – Applications and Program Development into a cohesive and sustainable model
Telehealth Program Development
Lessons Learned

- Start small with an evaluation model to familiarize with equipment and process flow
- Reach out to folks who have already done this
- Develop a community partnership model with like-minded organizations
- Beware of hype!! Educate yourself and ask a lot of questions!!
- Technology is the easy part – Focus time, effort, and money on program development and on a sustainable business model
- And finally:
  - COLLABORATION, COLLABORATION, COLLABORATION!!!
Next Steps...

- Take what we learned and help others to bring the benefits of telehealth to their patients/consumers.

- 4 Partners joined forces nationally to develop the “National Telehealth Network”
  
  - Finger Lakes Community & Migrant Health
  - Nat’l Center for Farmworker Health
  - Community Health Partnership of Illinois
  - Maine Migrant Health Program
Goals of the National Farmworker Telehealth Network

- Create a network of partners interested in using telehealth technology to improve health outcomes for patients.

- Provide training, program development and implementation as well as support to our partners as they build their own telehealth network within their catchment area.

- Share resources and educational opportunities with partners.
1) **Telemedicine for specialty care:**
   - Diabetic Retinopathy
   - Dentistry
   - Dermatology
   - Psychiatry
   - Counseling

2) **Distance Learning & Education**
   - Staff Development & Training
   - Health Literacy
   - Cultural Competency

3) **Enabling Services**
   - Interpreter Services
   - Administrative Coordination
Getting Started...

1. Administrative – who does what?

2. Technology – let’s get connected!

3. Clinical – Can you see me?
Administrative challenges

- Teaching non techies how to use a high definition video camera and software.
- Setting up a scheduling system for video calls.
- Working with Specialists to handle the financial end of visits.
- Education of how the technology works and spending a lot of time developing champions of telehealth.

- Keeping everyone sane!
Technology challenges...

A. Infrastructure of Network
   1. How will upgrades be handled?
   2. Who will have preference if network traffic is heavy?
   3. Maintenance of servers

B. End points (partner units)
   1. Getting the appropriate unit
   2. Broadband is our biggest challenge!
   3. Training, training, training!
Clinical

A. At the Health Center
1. Getting the Provider/staff to accept more technology
2. Policies & procedures of each type of visit
3. Patient satisfaction

B. The Specialist
1. How does the specialist get paid?
2. Who is in charge of maintaining the specialist equipment?
How are we doing?
We have...

- Fully integrated tele-dentistry into our pediatric dental care plan.
- Fully integrated tele-psychiatry into our medical department.
- Implementation and pilot of diabetic retinopathy completed.
  New sites coming on board this fall/winter.
- Offer tele-counseling to our patients at most of our sites.
- Have offered a variety of staff development opportunities through video conferencing.
- All administrative meetings offer video conferencing capabilities.
- All of our sites have video conferencing capabilities.
- We can connect to over 28 other agencies in our region for video conferencing/clinical calls.
Great websites to view:

- American Telehealth Assoc.: www.americantelemed.org
- Universal Service Funding: www.usac.org
  - Rural Health Care Program
- U.S. Dept. of Agriculture: www.usda.gov
  - Distance Learning and Telecommunications Program
- Office of Rural Health: www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/
  - Rural Health Network Development Program
Any questions...

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