

SHIP Webinar

Telehealth Implementation

October 30, 2024





HRSA

Health Resources & Services Administration

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The Center's Purpose

The National Rural Health Resource Center (The Center) is a leader in the improvement of rural health – serving as a national knowledge center that provides technical assistance, information, tools, and resources designed to support the financial and operational performance, and sustainability of the country's rural hospitals and clinics, rural health networks, and other rural health care organizations.

The Center's work is focused on strengthening state and local capacity in five key areas:

- Transition to Value and Population Health
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Performance Improvement
- Health Information Technology
- Workforce Development



Learning Objectives

- **Understand the basics of telehealth services**
- **Understand the allowable funding categories related to supporting telehealth**
- **Identify promising practices for implementing telehealth services supported by SHIP funds**

Telehealth

What does telehealth mean?

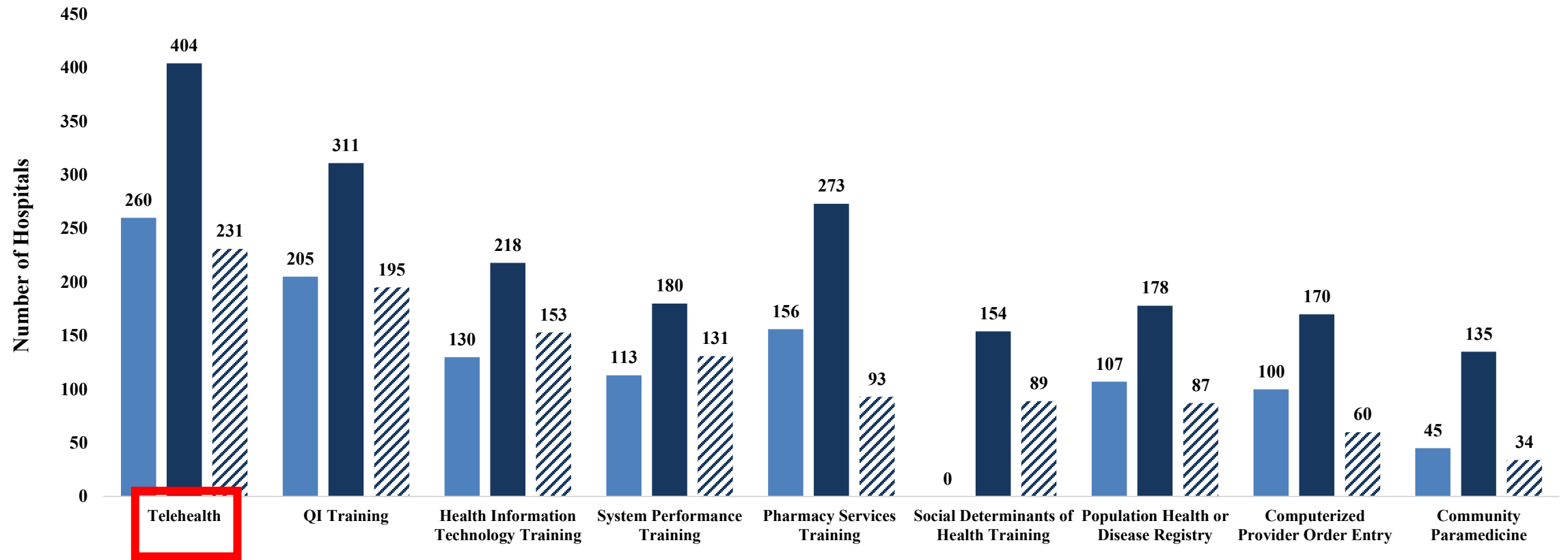
- **Telehealth — sometimes called telemedicine — lets patients see their health care provider without going to their office. Telehealth care allows patients to:**
 - Talk with a health care provider on the phone or using video.
 - Send messages with a health care provider safely.
 - Track health care using technology so patients can share information like blood pressure with their provider.

Source: [Why use telehealth? | Telehealth.HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov/telehealth/why-use-telehealth/)

Where does telehealth fit into SHIP?

- **ACO-G: Telehealth and mobile health hardware/software (not telecommunications)**
 - Training hardware/software that supports the application and implementation of telehealth and/or telemedicine. Tablets and hardware/software investments are allowed if they are used by staff to improve operational efficiencies and telehealth services.
- Source: SHIP Allowable Investments [Allowable Investments | National Rural Health Resource Center](#)

SHIP Hospital Use of ACO Investments FY 2020 - FY 2022



■ FY 2020 ■ FY 2021 ▨ FY 2022

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SHIP Allowable Investment examples

- ACO Telehealth software licensing that provides secure HIPAA compliant services for each provider using virtual care appointments.
- Updating hospital telehealth hardware and software
 - Can also assist with care coordination
- Purchase of hardware support for use of new telehealth services
- Hardware and software expenses for telehealth platform emergency services
- Training and education for telehealth use

SHIP Allowable Investment examples

- Expanding telehealth services for behavioral health
- Software for HIPAA-compliant web meeting software for dictation services
- Expanding telehealth to additional service lines or specialty services
- Implement Telehealth for night and weekend pharmacy coverage
- AMWELL training telehealth software
- Remote patient monitoring

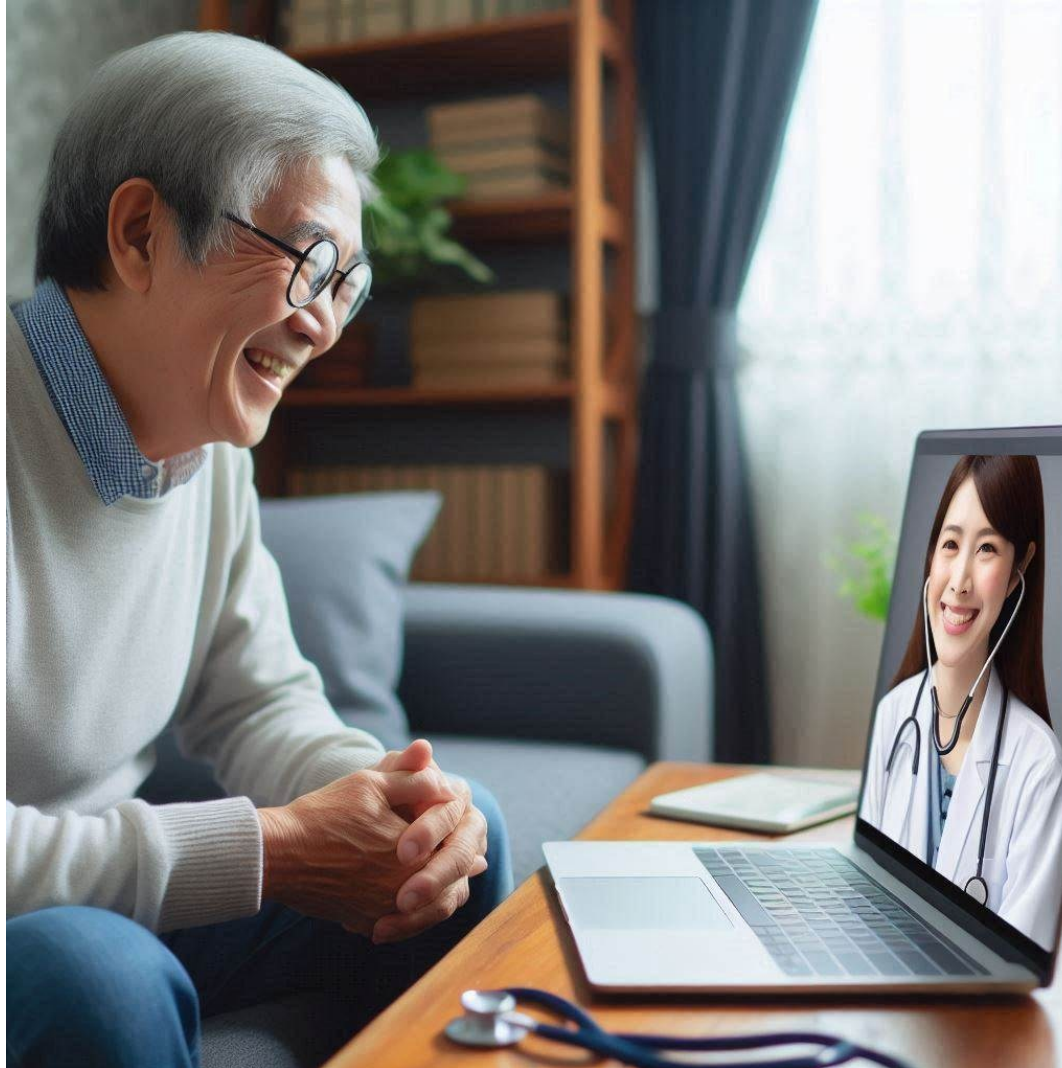
Bridging the Gap: Practical Applications of Telehealth In Rural Communities

Telehealth Innovations and Rural Health Applications



- **Agenda**
 - Telehealth Background
 - Telehealth Stepstones
 - Notes from the Field

What is Telehealth?



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Telehealth In Practice

- **Synchronous**

- Modality
 - Real-time video visit
 - Audio only may also be used
 - HIPAA compliance is important
- Use cases
 - Primary Care, patient to provider
 - Most Specialist Telehealth Visits

- **Asynchronous**

- Modality
 - Store and Forward
 - Record and push video or data to clinicians
 - HIPAA compliance is important
- Use cases
 - Radiology
 - Dermatology



Telehealth Locations

- **Distant Site:** The location of the healthcare provider delivering telehealth services.
- **Originating Site:** The patient's location during a telehealth encounter.
- **Presenting Site:** An originating site where a health professional assists in presenting the patient's case to the distant-site provider.

Great, Now Make it Rural

- **Space, drove the creation of Telehealth**
 - The Outputs of the STARPAHC Project Initiated the use of Indian Health Services and Telehealth utilization in the 1970's¹
- **Telehealth, albeit championed and fostered in urban spaces, thrives in rural ones**
 - Around the dawn of the internet the Alaska Federal Health Care Access Network began connecting with remote communities via telehealth²

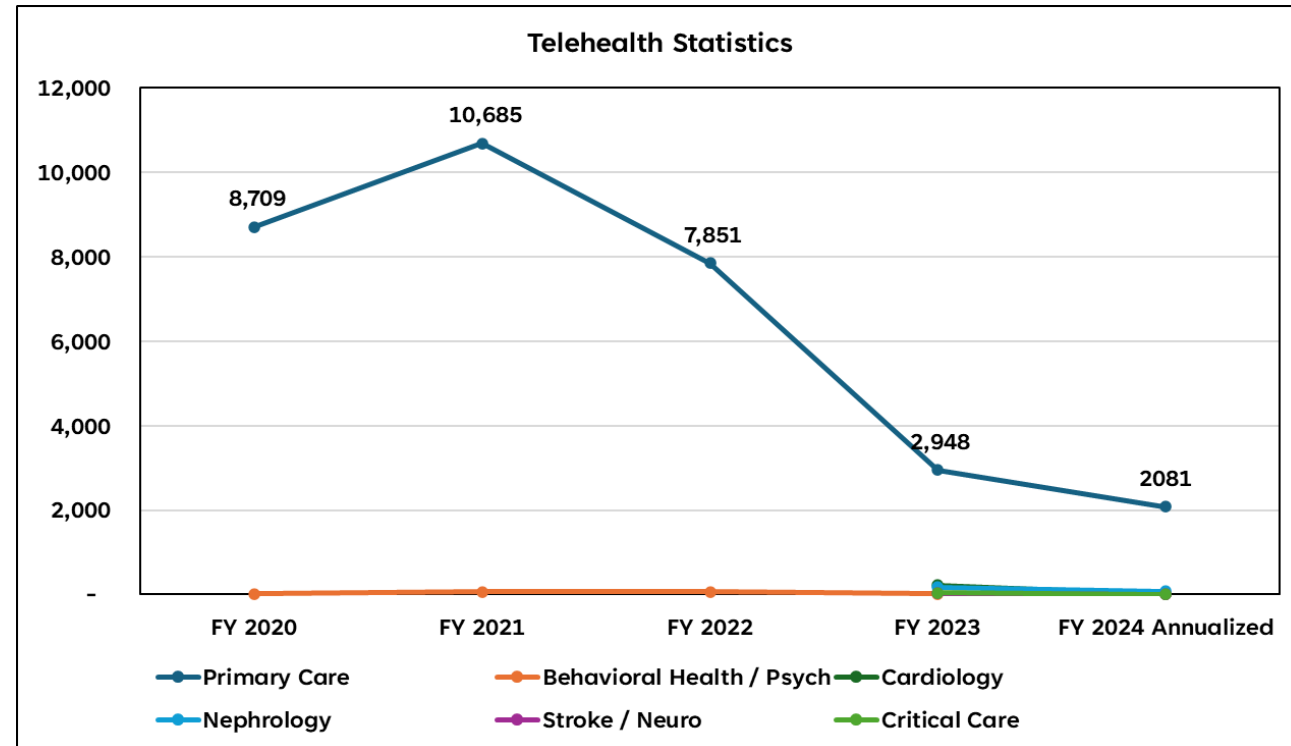
¹[Project MUSE - STARPAHC, a Telemedicine Project: An Oral History Interview with Peter A. Ruiz](#)

²[Telethinking-with-A.-Stewart-Ferguson-Ph.-D-2012.pdf](#)

Telehealth: From Hero to Zero?

- Covid didn't give birth to telehealth, but it did take off the training wheels
- However, in the post-Covid world, telehealth has seen a drop off
- That doesn't mean that telehealth is any less impactful today
- **Increased Access to Care:** Telehealth continues to provide significant improvements in healthcare access, outcomes, and affordability, even in the post-COVID era.³

³<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare/our-insights/telehealth-a-quarter-trillion-dollar-post-covid-19-reality>



Telehealth Steppingstones

- **Although Telehealth may be seeing a post-Covid hangover we currently see advances in technology impacting our HCO teams**
 - Service Line Development
 - Primary Care and the role of PCMH Models
 - Behavioral Health
 - Technology Developments
 - EHR Based Telehealth Platforms
 - Digital Front Door/Patient Engagement Platforms
 - AI Dictation Systems
 - Rural Health Challenges
 - Notes from the field

Enhancing Primary Care with Telehealth

- Primary Care and Patient Centered Medical Home Models
 - Primary Care as Initiator
 - Ensures comprehensive and coordinated care.
 - PCMH Models
 - Increased push due to value-based care.
 - Facilitate better continuum of care through telehealth.
 - Telehealth in PCMH
 - Improves coordination between primary care and specialists.⁴⁵
 - Enables efficient physician-to-physician consultations.⁶

⁴<https://bing.com/search?q=Patient-Centered+Medical+Home+models+effectiveness+in+value-based+care>

⁵<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/18/6886>

⁶<https://www.ncqa.org/programs/health-care-providers-practices/patient-centered-medical-home-pcmh/benefits-support/pcmh-evidence/>

Behavioral Health and Telehealth

- **Increased Need Post-COVID**

- Significant rise in demand for mental health services, even after demand for other outpatient telehealth services has diminished⁷

- **Cost-Effectiveness**

- Behavioral health telehealth is cost-effective due to minimal need for peripherals.
- Lower direct costs compared to in-person visits.

- **Challenges**

- Staffing issues: Difficulty in finding qualified providers.
- Contracted services: High costs for external services.
- Other barriers: Privacy concerns, internet connectivity issues.

⁷<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2805968>

Finding the Telehealth “Best Fit”

- **Variety of Telehealth Services**
 - Primary care and behavioral health: Simple HIPAA-compliant video systems.
 - Advanced systems: Require peripherals like otoscopes and stethoscopes connected to a computer on a cart.
- **Focus on Simplest Models**
 - Emphasis on primary care and behavioral health telehealth.
- **Utility of Embedded Systems**
 - **EHR Integration:** Keeps clinicians close to patient records, mitigating data loss⁸.
 - **Ease of Use:** Reduces the need for additional training.
 - **Future-Proofing:** Prepares for AI-based systems, making connected telehealth the gold standard.

⁸https://mplassociation.org/Web/Publications/Inside_Medical_Liability/Issues/2020/Q1/Articles/Electronic_health_record_usability_and_patient_safety.aspx

Digital Front Door/Patient Engagement

- Streamlined and Automated Processes
 - Digital front door technology enhances patient access and engagement⁹.
 - Patient engagement systems streamline workflows and improve patient-provider interactions¹⁰.
- Impact on Rural Healthcare Facilities
 - Reduces barriers to care in rural areas.
 - Facilitates timely and convenient access to healthcare services.

⁹<https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-024-11402-4>

¹⁰<https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-023-10198-z>

AI Integration, Small Steps, Big Aid

- **AI Integration in Telehealth and Rural Healthcare**
- **AI –Integrated Dictation Software:** Streamlines documentation through speech-to-text.
- **AI Scheduling Systems:** Optimize appointments, reduce no-shows, and send reminders.
- **Benefits:**
 - Reduces administrative burden.
 - Improves record accuracy and accessibility.
 - Enhances communication and remote consultations.
- **Impact:**
 - Supports value-based care.
 - Enhances efficiency and provider/patient satisfaction.

Notes from the Field

- **Telehealth Success Varies**
 - Revenue-dependent organizations focus on ROI.
 - Others prioritize downstream effects over initial ROI.
- **Patient Education and ROI**
 - Tools and technology enhance patient education.
 - Educated patients are more effective users of the healthcare system, aiding ROI¹¹.
- **Challenges in Developing Telehealth Services**
 - **Provider Buy-In and Contracting:** Most challenging aspect.
 - **Telespecialist Services:** Expensive and difficult for rural health teams.
 - Not the ideal first step for developing telehealth programs.

¹¹[systematic review of the effectiveness of patient education through patient portals | JAMIA Open | Oxford Academic](#)

Thank you and Let's Connect!!

- Please don't be afraid to reach out if you have questions or would like to know more about Telehealth or Digital Health in Rural Spaces
- Contact Info

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