

Reducing Health Disparities for Underserved Populations Using Telehealth

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Building Bridges and Breaking Down Barriers:
Diversity, Inclusion, and the Health Workforce

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The Center for Health Workforce Studies at SUNY Albany School of Public Health

- Established in 1996
- Based at the UAlbany School of Public Health
- Committed to collecting and analyzing data to understand workforce dynamics and trends
- Goal to inform public policies, the health and education sectors and the public
- Broad array of funders supporting our research

Today's Presentation

- Methods
 - Case Study
 - Survey of Providers
- Key Findings
- Benefits
- Barriers
- Facilitators
- Implications

Methods

Case Studies

- 8 site visits covering 7 telehealth programs
- Settings:
 - Home care
 - Long-term care
 - Community-based primary care
 - Acute care
 - FQHCs

Survey of Providers

Case Study Participants and Services Provided

- **Behavioral Health**

- Project ECHO, University of Rochester Medical Center in Rochester, New York
- Telepsychiatry Outpatient Services, St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center in Syracuse, New York
 - Medication reconciliation

- **Dental Care**

- Teledentistry Program, Finger Lakes Community Health in Geneva, New York

Case Study Participants and Services Provided

- **Home Care**

- House Calls Telehealth Program, New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation in New York, New York
- At Home Care, Bassett Healthcare Network in Oneonta, New York

- **Pediatric Care**

- Health-e-Access Program, Golisano Children's Hospital and Ibero Early Childhood Services Center, University of Rochester Medical Center in Rochester, New York

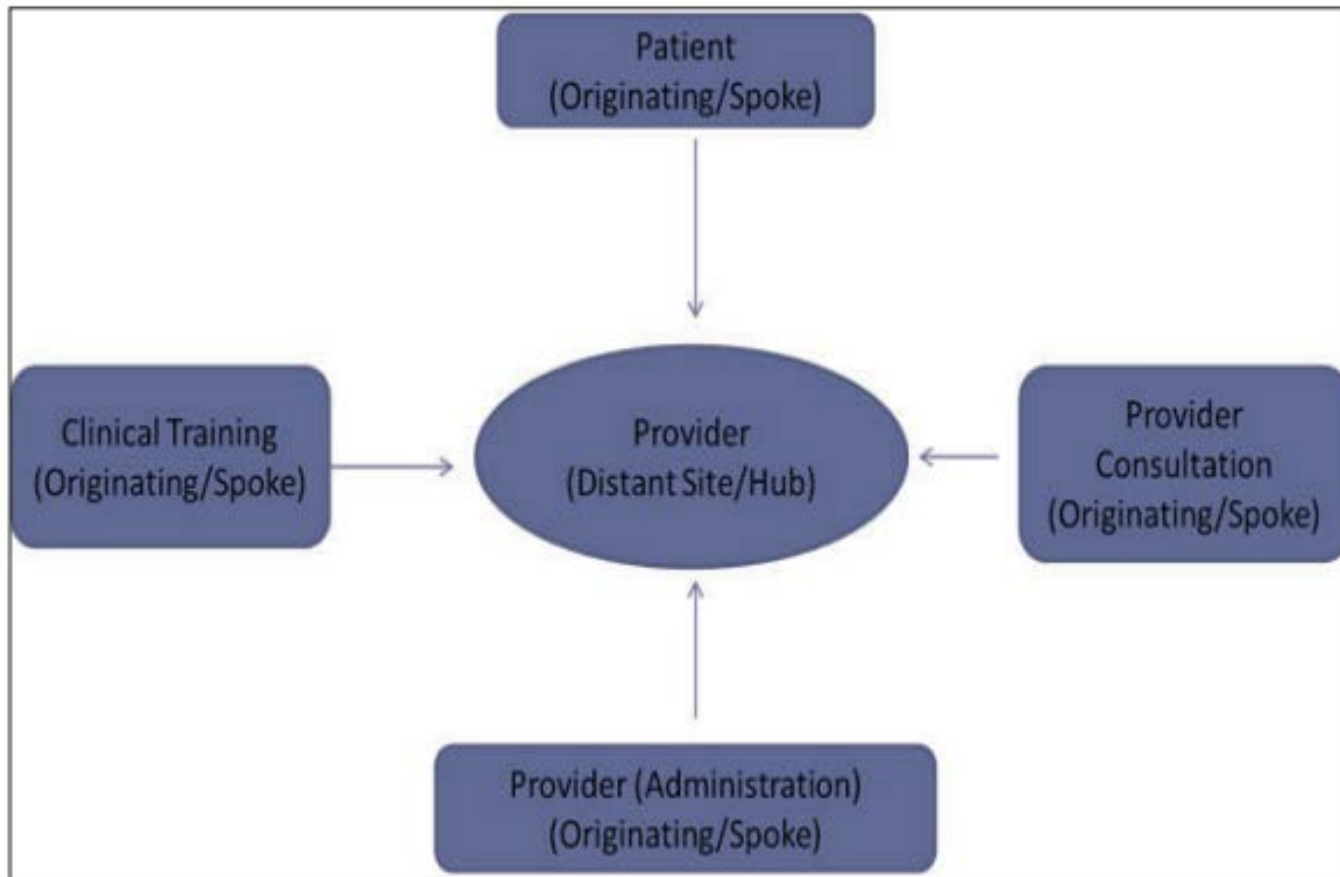
- **Wound Care**

- Wound Healing Center, Rochester Regional Health in Rochester, New York

Survey of Providers

- Over 650 responses
 - 53% of hospitals
 - 47% of FQHCs
 - 14% of long-term care facilities
 - 11% of home health agencies
 - Less than 2% of physicians
- Limited analysis to hospitals and FQHCs due to low response rate

Hub and Spoke Model



Telehealth Applications in Use

- Synchronous
 - Examinations
 - Treatment
- Asynchronous (store and forward)
- Remote patient monitoring (RPM)
- Mobile health
- Education/consulting
- Administration/meetings

Key Findings

- Telehealth programs tend to be uniquely tailored to local need
- Telehealth strategies are constantly evolving alongside developments in technology
- Telehealth is an effective strategy to improve access to care for remote and underserved populations
- Telehealth allows for connection with providers regardless of location
- Telehealth services reduce wait times

Key Findings

- Telehealth training is a crucial component for patients and providers for adoption and implementation
- Assistance is needed for telehealth start-up, equipment, and training
- Telehealth funding sources and reimbursement levels are variable
- Telehealth provides an opportunity to facilitate a multidisciplinary team based approach

Benefits

Telehealth:

- Eliminates need to travel long distances for both patients and providers
- Strengthens relationship between patients and providers
- Improves provider confidence
- Shortens wait times
- Lowers no show rates
- Reduction of absences from school and child care programs
- Saves money by reducing inpatient stays and ED visits

Facilitators

- Internal payment mechanisms (vs. insurance reimbursement)
- Grant funding
- Networking between multidisciplinary providers
- Advances in technology
- Policies and reimbursement supporting telehealth

Barriers

- Reimbursement and start-up costs
 - Variable coverage by insurers
 - Originating sites not always covered
 - Start-up costs expensive
 - Initial and ongoing training costs not covered
- Problematic regulations that limit interaction among providers and patients
- Cumbersome information exchange
 - Lack of consistent information integration
- Provider hesitance to become involved
 - Time concerns

Implications

- Need for:
 - Better definition of what telehealth is
 - Supportive regulatory climate
 - Adequate and consistent reimbursement
 - Originating site
 - Fewer providers in low volume areas

Questions?

- For more information, please email me at:

- Visit us on:

