



## Office for the Advancement of Telehealth Telehealth Network Grant Program (TNGP) Monthly e-Blast - February 2021

### Program-Specific Updates

#### Telehealth Network Grant Program Communities of Practice

Our next Telehealth Network Grant Program (TNGP) Communities of Practice calls (i.e., peer group calls) will occur in February. You should have recently received a calendar invite with the date and access information for the group(s) you initially participated in when they kicked off in November. Please accept the Outlook invite to help us keep track of attendees. If you have any questions about your groups or need further assistance, please reach out to the relevant technical assistance (TA) lead for each group. The following is the schedule for the February calls (all calls take place 3:00-4:30 pm ET):

- **Tuesday, Feb. 9** - Care Team and Patient Buy-in (TA Lead: Laurel Simmons)
- **Thursday, Feb. 11** - Data Collection & Outcomes Measurement (TA Lead: Christine St. Andre)
- **Tuesday, Feb. 16** - Tele-Behavioral Health (TA Lead: Laurel Simmons)
- **Wednesday, Feb. 17** - Integrating Emergency Medical Services (TA Lead: Christine St. Andre)
- **Thursday, Feb. 18** - Strategies for Seamless Care Across Sites (TA Lead: Roger Chaufourmier)

In December, you should have received a message from the TA team with instructions for joining the online TNGP Peer Group Community on [www.healthcarecommunities.org](http://www.healthcarecommunities.org). This is an online space where you can connect with other TNGP grantees and share resources with one another. If you have further questions about accessing or using the portal, please reach out to your dedicated TA provider.

#### Year 1 Baseline PIMS Reporting

Thank you all for your timely submission of your Year 1 baseline PIMS data. Your HRSA project officer and TA provider will be reviewing your baseline PIMS reports. Time will be dedicated on February monthly calls to debriefing the PIMS reports, including addressing any questions or items for additional clarification from your report.

#### FirstNet Webinar

The Office for the Advancement of Telehealth has organized a webinar with FirstNet for Feb. 3, 2021, from 3:00-4:00 pm ET to provide an overview of their work and services, providing a communications platform for first responders and the public safety community. [Click here](#) to access the webinar.

#### Quarterly TA Webinar (early March)

The TNGP team is planning our next webinar for early March focused on integration of behavioral health in the emergency department (ED) setting. As soon as the date and time are confirmed, you will receive an email with registration and other details for accessing the webinar. Stay tuned, more to come!

### Resources, News, and Other Updates

#### [HRSA Evidence-Based Telehealth Grant Program](#) - Applications due April 2

The Health Resources and Services Administration's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy will be making up to 14 new awards through the Evidence-Based

Telehealth Network Grant Program. Each awardee will receive up to \$350,000 annually. The goals of this program are to demonstrate how health care systems can increase access to health care services utilizing direct-to-consumer telehealth technologies and to conduct evaluations of those efforts to establish an evidence base for assessing the effectiveness of direct-to-consumer telehealth care for patients, providers, and payers. Eligible applicants are domestic public or private, nonprofit or for-profit entities with demonstrated experience utilizing telehealth technologies to serve rural underserved populations. [Click here](#) for more information.

### [Improving Rural Health Through Telehealth- Guided Provider-to-Provider Communication](#)

The Evidence-based Practice Center Program at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has posted the protocol for [Improving Rural Health Through Telehealth-Guided Provider-to-Provider Communication](#). If there is unpublished scientific information relevant to this topic, individuals may submit it via the [Supplemental Evidence and Data for Systematic Reviews portal](#). The deadline for submissions is **Feb. 16, 2021**. Materials submitted cannot be confidential as they may be made public. This review will identify and synthesize the literature on telehealth-guided clinical decision-making by health care providers for rural patients, telehealth-associated clinical outcomes, the benefits and unintended consequences of the use of telehealth, and the effectiveness of implementation and sustainability strategies for provider-to-provider telehealth in rural areas.

### [5 Points Necessary to Roll Out Telemedicine](#)

This recent [blog post](#) on the American Telemedicine Association site authored by Thomas Foley of AMD Global Telemedicine lists and explain five points health care providers and facilities should consider when implementing telemedicine. The five points are:

- Scalability across the enterprise and modalities of care
- Seamless device integration
- Integration with electronic health records (EHRs)
- Simplicity
- Telehealth has a lot more to offer than just a video-only interface

### [Billing for Telehealth During COVID-19](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has propelled the evolution of telehealth. In turn, evolving billing and reimbursement policies and practices for telehealth services. This site from the Department of Health and Human Services provides information and guidance on various topics regarding billing for telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic. Topic areas include:

- Medicare payment policies during COVID-19
- Billing and coding Medicare fee-for-service claims
- Billing Medicare as a safety-net provider
- State Medicaid telehealth coverage
- Reimbursement for COVID-19 care of uninsured patients
- Private insurance coverage for telehealth

### [Technology Optimization Best Practices](#)

Healthcare IT News provides a [19-part feature story series](#) from experts in the health information technology field. Experts provide health care leaders with strategies to best optimize technologies to produce the desired outcomes specific to the organization's clinical and business needs. Best practice topics include:

- Getting the most out of telehealth
- Boosting revenue cycle management
- Pushing patient engagement further
- Enriching healthcare communications
- Tips for making EHRs work for your staff and enable organization goals
- Secrets to getting the most from IT consulting engagements

### [Telehealth Challenges and Limitations for Providers](#)

The United States' health care system's rapid transition to widespread telehealth practices has created some challenges and limitations for some providers and health care facilities. The article authored by Jeff Lagasse highlights a few of these challenges and limitations to telehealth adoption. A few challenges include patients with chronic diseases delaying care due to preferring in-person care, all providers not being equally capable of implementing telehealth services, and difficulties with reimbursement for providers. [Click here](#) for the full article.

### [Telehealth Sample Forms and Templates](#)

The Upper Midwest Telehealth Resource Center provides [sample forms and templates](#) for telehealth planning, implementation, and practice. Sample forms and templates are provided on:

- Telehealth job descriptions
- Telemedicine consultation consent forms
- Consent for Treatment and Release of Information
- Information Needs and Use Survey
- Readiness Assessment Form
- Survey of Physician and Computer Technology Form
- Telehealth Appointment Log Template
- Various Telehealth Encounter and Protocol Forms
- Telehealth Video Conferencing Agreement Form

### [Telephone Service Delivery Working Group Provides Recommendations Post-PHE](#)

The Vermont Telephone Service Delivery Working Group drafted a 114-page [report](#) outlining audio-only telehealth services' implications and improving access to care during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report also provides recommendations for the continuation of commercial payer and Medicaid coverage of audio-only telehealth services. A few of the recommendations include:

- Addressing the digital health divide, including broadband, technology, and digital literacy gaps.
- Requiring commercial health insurers to continue to cover audio-only telephone services post the COVID-19 public health emergency when medically necessary and clinically appropriate.
- Utilizing a value-based, prospective or capitated payment system for audio-only services, following a transition period for a minimum of two years.

#### [HHS Invests \\$8 Million to Address Gaps in Rural Telehealth through the Telehealth Broadband Pilot](#)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), recently awarded \$8 million to fund the Telehealth Broadband Pilot (TBP) program. The TBP program assesses the broadband capacity available to rural health care providers and patient communities to improve their access to telehealth services. This telehealth pilot program is part of the Rural Action Plan that HHS launched this past year, which lays out a path forward to coordinate agency efforts to transform and improve rural health care. [Read the release.](#)

## Upcoming Events



### [Virtual Office Hours: Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center - Questions about Telehealth Technology or Vendors](#)

**Feb. 2, 2021, 1:00-2:00 pm ET**

Join the monthly office hours with Mike Patterson with the Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center around the topic of technology and working with vendors.

[Register](#)



### [Webinar: Telehealth & Medicaid: What's Next? A Roadmap for Medicaid Telehealth Policy in a Post-COVID World \(Panel Discussion\)](#)

**Feb. 5, 2021, 11:00 am PT**

Join the Center for Connected Health Policy and leading Medicaid experts to discuss the future of telehealth policy in Medicaid. The presenters include:

- Joanne Jee, principal analyst, Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission
- Tracy Johnson, Ph.D., Medicaid director, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing
- Lori Coyner, Medicaid director, Oregon Health Authority
- Sara Salek, M.D., chief medical officer, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

[Register](#)



### [Webinar: Data as the Foundation for Broadband Planning](#)

**Feb. 15, 2021, 2:00-3:00 pm ET**

Join Broadband USA as they provide insight into broadband access and availability, understanding speed test datasets, and how to use data to strengthen broadband planning efforts.

[Register](#)

## [34th Annual Rural Health Care Leadership Conference - Virtual](#)

**Feb. 17-18, 2021**

Join the American Hospital Association as they host their 34th annual Rural Health Care Leadership conference. Top practitioners, thinkers, and experts will share strategies and resources to assist participants with their shift towards a more integrated and sustainable rural health system; and examine and address operational and environmental challenges for rural hospitals and their communities. [Click here to register.](#)

[Register](#)



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