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

Program-Specific Updates

Telehealth Network Grant Program (TNGP) Communities of Practice Calls
The next round of calls will take place in May. These groups continue to meet quarterly and are driven by the interests and needs of participants in each group. If you are interested in joining a group but not yet involved with one, please reach out to your technical assistance (TA) provider. The following is the schedule for the May calls (**all calls take place 3:00-4:30 pm ET**):

- Tuesday, May 18 – Care Team and Patient Buy-in (TA Lead: Laurel Simmons)
- Thursday, May 20 – Data Collection & Outcomes Measurement (TA Lead: Christine St. Andre)
- Tuesday, May 25 – Tele-Behavioral Health (TA Lead: Laurel Simmons)
- Wednesday, May 26 – Integrating Emergency Medical Services (TA Lead: Christine St. Andre)
- Thursday, May 27 – Strategies for Seamless Care Across Sites (TA Lead: Roger Chaufournier)

Be on the lookout for communications from TNGP TA providers with information on joining these groups.

Health Care Landscape Report - COVID-19 and Telehealth Policy
The TNGP TA team sent out in early March the first of two Health Care Landscape Analysis Reports that look at the health care environment and explore current policies, factors, trends, innovations, and resources relevant to rural telehealth initiatives. The first report, *COVID-19 and Telehealth: The Past, Present, and Future of Telehealth Policy,* examines the current policy landscape and the implications for telehealth programs moving forward within this current environment. Please find the report here.

It is also accompanied by a recorded webinar presented by Bill Rencher, J.D., M.P.H., senior research associate at the Georgia Health Policy Center. This brief webinar provides additional context and an overview of the report. Please click here to listen to the webinar. The report, webinar recording, and slide deck are all posted

to the TNGP page on our grantee site for you to access at any time.

TNGP Quarterly Newsletter
The next edition of the TNGP quarterly newsletter, *The Telehealth Quarterly Digest*, will be released the first week of June. It is brought to you by your TNGP TA team and includes grantee spotlights, program updates, articles, resources, and upcoming events. If, for any reason, you do not receive the email in your inbox, please check your junk/spam folder, and, if there, move the email to your inbox and add it to your safe sender list or flag it as not junk/spam.

As a reminder, we are posting all quarterly newsletters and monthly e-blasts on the TNGP page of the grantee site, where you can always access them.

Resources, News, and Other Updates

Is the Digital Divide the Newest Social Determinant of Health
The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed yet another form of inequity, the digital divide. While some patients can access and use telehealth services, others, unfortunately, can not. Broadband support, technological devices, and digital literacy (the ability to use and understand technology) all contribute to whether a patient has the capability to access and utilize telehealth services. The inability to access telehealth services, especially during a time where it is the primary source of healthcare delivery, can negatively affect health outcomes and further exacerbate health disparities. The author highlights the disparities around the adoption and use of telehealth during the pandemic, poor broadband access in rural communities and addresses digital literacy. Click here to access the article.

New C2C Telehealth Resource Available
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services developed an initiative, *From Coverage to Care* (C2C)*,* to assist enrollees with understanding their health coverage and connect them to primary care and preventive services. C2C has developed two new resources to support providers and patients with virtual care.

- **Telehealth: What to Know for Your Family** Patients can explore the various types of care they can receive through telehealth, how to use telehealth, how to schedule an appointment, and more.
- **Telehealth for Providers: What You Need to Know** Providers can explore telehealth basics, how to start and sustain telehealth, billing for telehealth, and more.

Funding Opportunity: Rural Healthcare Connect Fund
The Universal Service Administrative Company is providing funding to rural public and nonprofit healthcare providers through their Healthcare Connect Fund Program. The program offers a 65% discount on eligible broadband connectivity expenses for eligible rural health care providers. Applicants can apply as an individual health care provider or as a consortium. The application deadline is June 1, 2021. Please click here for more information.

Funding Opportunity: Rural Health Care Telecommunications Program
The Universal Service Administrative Company is providing funding to rural public and nonprofit healthcare providers through their Telecommunication Program. The program offers reduced rates to rural health care providers for telecommunications and voice services to use for telehealth. The application deadline is June 1, 2021. Please click here for more information.

Upcoming Events

Medicaid Telehealth Policies for Children & Youth

May 7, 2021, 11:00 AM PT
Please join the Center for Connected Health Policy as they host their second webinar in their spring webinar series, *Medicaid Telehealth Policies for Children and Youth*. The webinar will feature presentations on current trends and innovations in Medicaid telehealth policy for children and youth.

Register

COVID-19 and the Future of Behavioral Health Care Delivery

May 11, 2021, 2:30-4:00 p.m. ET
Please join the National Council for Behavioral Health as they host a webinar that will explore the experiences and implications of telehealth practices and policy during COVID-19 and beyond from a provider, payer and state perspective. This webinar is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Register

Medicaid Telehealth Policies for Seniors

May 14, 2021, 11:00 AM PT
Please join the Center for Connected Health Policy as they host their third webinar in their spring webinar series, *Medicaid Telehealth Policies for Seniors*. The webinar will discuss how state programs and Medicaid agencies incorporate telehealth into their services for seniors. Medicaid officials will also discuss policy changes during COVID-19 and their impact on plans for the future of telehealth and seniors in their states.

Register

Health Care After the Pandemic: What Will Change?

May 14, 2021, 12:00–1:00 PM ET
Please join the Penn Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics as they cosponsor a webinar that will review changes in telehealth, digital health, and home care. The panelist will also discuss how these changes could potentially affect patients, providers, and health systems in the future.

Telemental Health & State Medicaid Policies

May 21, 2021, 11:00 AM PT

Please join the Center for Connected Health Policy as they host their fourth webinar in their spring webinar series, Telemental Health, and State Medicaid Policies. The webinar will discuss innovative ways and strategies to incorporate telehealth in Medicaid behavioral health services and programs. Medicaid officials will also discuss policy changes during COVID-19 and their impact on plans for the future of telemental health.

This digest is brought to you by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) and the TNGP Technical Assistance Team.