

Delaware Telehealth Learning Lab Webinar Series

Overview

Delaware SIM grant activities aim to improve healthcare quality and patient experience and lower healthcare costs. As an innovative emerging healthcare practice, the use of telehealth is well aligned with this mission. Telehealth is generally underutilized across most healthcare sectors in Delaware, which is not unexpected in a largely fee for service system. As payment models shift from fee for service to value-based payment, the potential impact of telehealth will become more apparent, and utilization should increase. Providers and practices that are considering telehealth, or have begun to explore models, or have developed pilots, or have fully implemented programs will be better positioned to manage total cost of care. Therefore, to better acquaint Delaware providers with telehealth's scope, operations and potential impact and encourage enthusiasm and telehealth program implementation, the Delaware Health Care Commission hosted a seven-part Telehealth Learning Lab Webinar Series, with follow-up office hours provided upon request by participants.

A team of telehealth experts from Health Management Associates (HMA) led the content development and presented the series, with valuable contributions from Delaware-based providers and stakeholders. DHCC and HMA collaborated to promote the Learning Lab to all providers throughout the state, with an emphasis on those providers already involved with SIM practice transformation activities.

Summary of Webinar Series

Introduction to Telehealth and Opportunities in Delaware – December 19, 2018

The first webinar, presented by Dr. Jean Glossa, Managing Principal for Clinical Services, and Dr. Uche S. Uchendu, Principal, included an introduction to telehealth basics, the current state of telehealth in Delaware and proposed future goals for broader adoption. Dr. Glossa reviewed common telehealth definitions and an overview of telehealth modalities. Dr. Uchendu related the progress of telehealth design and implementation over the years and the current state in Delaware. Carolyn Morris, MHSA, DHSS Director of Planning and Development and Chair of the Delaware Telehealth Coalition joined the first webinar to provide an overview of Coalition, and how it can support the use of telehealth in Delaware.

Digitally Integrated Primary Care and Behavioral Health – January 10, 2019

David M. Bergman, Principal, and Dr. Lori Raney, Principal, outlined and provided examples to demonstrate a spectrum of technologies currently used in integrated primary care settings, from applications (apps), text messaging and digital therapeutics to e-Consults, Remote Tele-Hubs and Telepsychiatry. The webinar described how telehealth platforms increase the capacity and the reach of behavioral health providers, as well as creating better coordination between physical and behavioral health care.

Additional Technology-Enhanced Solutions for Delaware – January 16, 2019

HMA Principals Dr. Uchendu, Dr. Greg Vachon, and Dr. Barry J. Jacobs built upon the previous webinars to provide participants with additional options for telehealth design and program development. The presenters covered a broad range of burgeoning technologies beyond the behavioral health integration lens. Participants learned about apps to increase wellness and adherence to treatment and to assist with patient and provider decision support. In addition, content included eConsult as an effective means of

improving outcomes and lowering costs; automated SMS texts as a communication method for conveying information and reminders; and digital platforms for patients and their family caregivers.

Telehealth Reimbursement and Payment Models – January 18, 2019

Dr. Raney and Amanda White, Senior Consultant, facilitated a presentation by Carolyn Morris, MHSA, DHSS Director of Planning and Development and chair of the Delaware Telehealth Coalition, who delved into the nuts-and-bolts of establishing a telehealth practice in Delaware, including insurance reimbursement, eligible distant site providers, and state regulations. Ms. Morris also shared billing codes for remote patient monitoring and virtual visits.

Telehealth Business Plan Development and Readiness Assessment – January 22, 2019

Mary Kate Brousseau, Senior Consultant, and Dr. Uchendu presented the key first steps for telehealth program design and development – performing a comprehensive telehealth readiness assessment for an organization and developing a business plan for financial viability and sustainability. The readiness assessment should include at least eleven components, varying from team and leadership engagement, organizational change, workforce capacity, patient need for telehealth services, and policy and regulatory support. The presenters shared how the readiness assessment also provides the research to inform a business plan for engaging funders, communicating with vendors, and sustaining a practice.

Vendor and Equipment Selection – January 24, 2019

David Bergman and Dr. Vachon reviewed Delaware regulations on technology requirements, site requirements, and emerging Medicare rules and outlined the vendor selection process, highlighting key areas to compare when selecting equipment. The presenters also explored the nuances of three use case scenarios: provider-to-patient at home, provider-to-patient at a medical facility, and provider-to-provider consultation.

Use Cases from the Field – January 29, 2019

Dr. Uchendu facilitated a discussion with two representatives from Delaware telehealth programs currently in place, to share lessons learned and pointers for telehealth implementation in behavioral health provider settings. Delaware practitioners Beverly Lawson, LPCMH, Associate Director of Treatment Services for People’s Place Behavioral Health Centers and Traci Bolander, PsyD, Chief Executive Officer of Mid-Atlantic Behavioral Health shared their stories of how their practices chose, implemented and scaled up ongoing telehealth programs.

Results and Next Steps for SIM Sustainability

The Telehealth Learning Lab Webinar Series addressed a range of introductory and advanced topics and attracted a diverse selection of representatives from across the State. Participants included a broad representation of healthcare stakeholders from health systems, behavioral health agencies, healthcare consulting firms, dietitian, medical billing and coding companies, hospice care programs, health insurance advocacy groups, pain management programs, pharmacy benefit management companies, and data analytics firms, as well as non-healthcare participants from higher education, law, government, IT consulting, and digital marketing. Ms. Carolyn Morris, chair of the Delaware Telehealth Coalition, strengthened the series with a wealth of knowledge matched by passion for technology to improve health care delivery. The series helped to reintroduce and further promote the Delaware Telehealth Coalition and Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center as valuable resources for participants to access to develop or expand telehealth programs.

The Telehealth Learning Lab Webinar Series allowed participants to learn and collaborate in virtual and interactive lecture seminars delivered using the Zoom platform. The DHCC posted materials on the Choose Health DE website, along with other SIM related resources to support continued learning and discussion beyond the end of the SIM project period.

Medical care is changing fast. It could be your primary care provider's use of the camera on your laptop to remotely examine your red facial rash. Or it might be the digital platform that same provider uses to later share a photo of your rash with a dermatologist for an e-consult. Or it could be the phone app you nervously use to look up rare skin conditions just as soon as your virtual primary care session ends. All these technologies are part of telehealth, a broad array of computer-based means of exchanging information for medical care and health and wellness. In the last two decades, telehealth's growth has only been limited by the imaginations of its practitioners. It has evolved into dozens of technology-based applications, including the areas of psychiatry, therapy, primary care, dermatology, neurology, occupational health, surgical care, nutrition, and other forms. It has been widely used by many states to meet the challenges of providing basic and specialty care to far-flung, rural patients as well as urban dwellers in densely populated but medically underserved neighborhoods. It is increasingly seen as a key component of value-based payment models and a foundation stone of healthcare innovation.

The Telehealth Learning Lab supported telehealth program design and development in alignment and support of practice transformation activities already completed and in process to ensure that Delaware continues toward their goal of Triple Aim Plus One. Telehealth program design and implementation aligns with behavioral health integration activities, addresses specialty care clinician shortages and concerns identified through the primary care collaborative and transformation work, and provides options for cost savings throughout the delivery system. The goal is to continue to enhance health care systems for improved access, patient experience, quality of care and decreased total cost of care. Telehealth will only grow in Delaware in the years to come. It will ultimately enable all healthcare providers to better deploy limited resources to serve vulnerable populations wherever they are.