Overview of Telehealth in NC

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About the **Office of Rural Health (ORH)** and Our Mission

- First state office (1973) in the nation created to focus on the needs of rural and underserved communities
- ORH Mission Statement: The North Carolina Office of Rural Health (ORH) supports equitable access to health in rural and underserved communities.
- To achieve its mission, ORH works collaboratively to provide:
  - Funding
  - Training
  - Technical assistance
- For high quality, innovative, accessible, cost effective services that support the maintenance and growth of the State’s safety net and rural communities.

**State Fiscal Year 2019 Office Facts:**

- Administered over 300 contracts
- Spent $26.3 million from state, federal, and philanthropic sources
- Returned over 88% of its budget directly to NC communities
- Provided 2,133 technical assistance activities

While we do not provide direct care, our programs support numerous health care safety net organizations throughout North Carolina.
SFY 2019 Map of ORH Coverage

Legend

- State Designated Rural Health Center (17 Sites Covering 38 Counties)
- Medication Assistance Program Grantee (106 Sites Covering 96 Counties)
- Community Health Grantee (114 Grantees Covering 98 Counties)
- Farmworker Health Grantee (12 Grantees Covering 61 Counties)
- Health Information Technology Program (166 Grantees Covering 59 Counties)
- Provider Placement (106 Placements Covering 47 Counties)
- Critical Access Hospital (20 Sites Covering 19 Counties)
- Small Rural Hospital (12 Sites Covering 11 Counties)
- Telepsychiatry Site (53 Sites Covering 41 Counties)

Note: Sites may cover multiple counties in addition to its designated county location.

*Numbers inside of symbols indicate number of sites, grantees, or placements, based on symbol.
**ORH Health Information Technology (HIT) Program**

**Current Projects**

- **NC HealthConnex Statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE)** - Assisting ORH Grantees and Safety Net Providers with connecting to and utilizing the Statewide HIE (NC HealthConnex).

- **NCCARE360 Community Information Exchange (CIE)** – Assisting ORH Grantees and Safety Net Providers with Enrolling and utilizing the Statewide Healthy Opportunities Resource Platform.

- **Telehealth (TH) Initiatives** – Providing safety net providers with telehealth technical assistance, creating a statewide telehealth inventory and working with DIT Broadband Team on an ARC Grant Telehealth Feasibility Study.

- **EHR Technical Assistance (TA)** – Providing technical assistance to Rural Health Centers and other ORH Grantees with reporting Clinical Quality Measures from their Electronic Health Record.
In the blink of an eye, telehealth and health care became synonymous.

**Question:** Who led your company’s digital transformation efforts?

A. CTO  
B. Multi-stakeholder Digital Transformation Team  
C. COVID-19
What is telehealth?

Telehealth is defined as the use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration.

(Health Resources & Services Administration)

NC DHHS Report on Telemedicine Study and Recommendations
October 2017
The Telehealth Technical Assistance, Education and Resources (TER) Workgroup and the Telehealth Consumer Engagement Workgroup worked together to develop a DHHS Telehealth Webpage which contains resources for providers and consumers related to telehealth.
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant - Broadband Feasibility Study for Telehealth Deployment in Western North Carolina

ARC Grant Awarded to: NC Department of Information Technology - Broadband Infrastructure Office (BIO) in partnership with the Office of Rural Health

Grant info/Background info:

1. Programs and health interventions should be tailored to each community’s specific needs
2. Develop a Cohesive State Policy to Enable Telehealth Expansion
3. Through the Office of Rural Health, the state should provide Technical Assistance to Safety Net Sites to Support Telehealth Implementation
4. The state, federal government, partners and stakeholders should dedicate resources to increase broadband availability to unserved households in the coal-impacted counties
5. The state, partners and stakeholders should implement innovative and comprehensive broadband adoption and digital inclusion programs
6. Encourage safety net sites to evaluate their broadband subscription before launching telehealth programs
7. Entrepreneurial support organizations should provide intentional support for entrepreneurs who desire to launch digital health startups in the coal-impacted counties
Telehealth alignment with NC DHHS Current Initiatives

- **NC DHHS Strategic Plan 2019-2021**
  - **Goal 1: Objective 1.5** - Work with underserved and underrepresented communities to improve access to quality health care to promote health equity.
    - **Measure 1.5.3** - Number of new telehealth sites operating in NC's rural communities/counties with a HPSA score of 15-25.
    - **Strategy 1.5.3** - Increase access to care and innovative delivery models via telehealth. (Medicaid, ORH, DPH)

- **Opioid Action Plan, Early Childhood Action Plan and Healthy Opportunities** –
  - Telehealth is a tool that can be utilized to support several of the goals in current NC DHHS Action plans.

- **State Broadband Plan** DHHS Telehealth Goals
  - Better leverage the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF).
  - Endorse and assist in distributing telehealth best practices.
  - Provide education to patients on various low-cost broadband subscription options.
  - Conduct telehealth modality case studies
  - Advocate for additional resources for DHHS Office of Rural Health for health IT technical assistance
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North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Website

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