



VIRTUAL HEALTH LITERATE SERVICES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Roundtable on Health Literacy

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Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People



Agenda

- Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA)
Overview
- Office for the Advancement of Telehealth Key Programs
- Best Practices: Digital Literacy in OAT Funded Programs





Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Overview



Supports more than 90 programs that provide health care to people who are geographically isolated, economically or medically challenged



HRSA does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 3,000 awardees, including community and faith-based organizations, colleges and universities, hospitals, state, local, and tribal governments, and private entities



Every year, HRSA programs serve tens of millions of people, including people with HIV/AIDS, pregnant women, mothers and their families, and those otherwise unable to access quality health care



Office for the Advancement of Telehealth

- HRSA is home to the **Office for the Advancement of Telehealth:**
- Serves across HHS and enhances coordination with other key federal partners to leverage telehealth to improve access, enhance outcomes, and support clinicians and patients
- Promotes the use of telehealth technologies for health care delivery, education, and health information services
- Provides funding for direct services, research, and technical assistance in the field of telehealth

42 U.S. Code § 254c-18 - Telemedicine; incentive grants regarding coordination among States

42 U.S. Code § 254c-14 - Telehealth network and telehealth resource centers grant programs

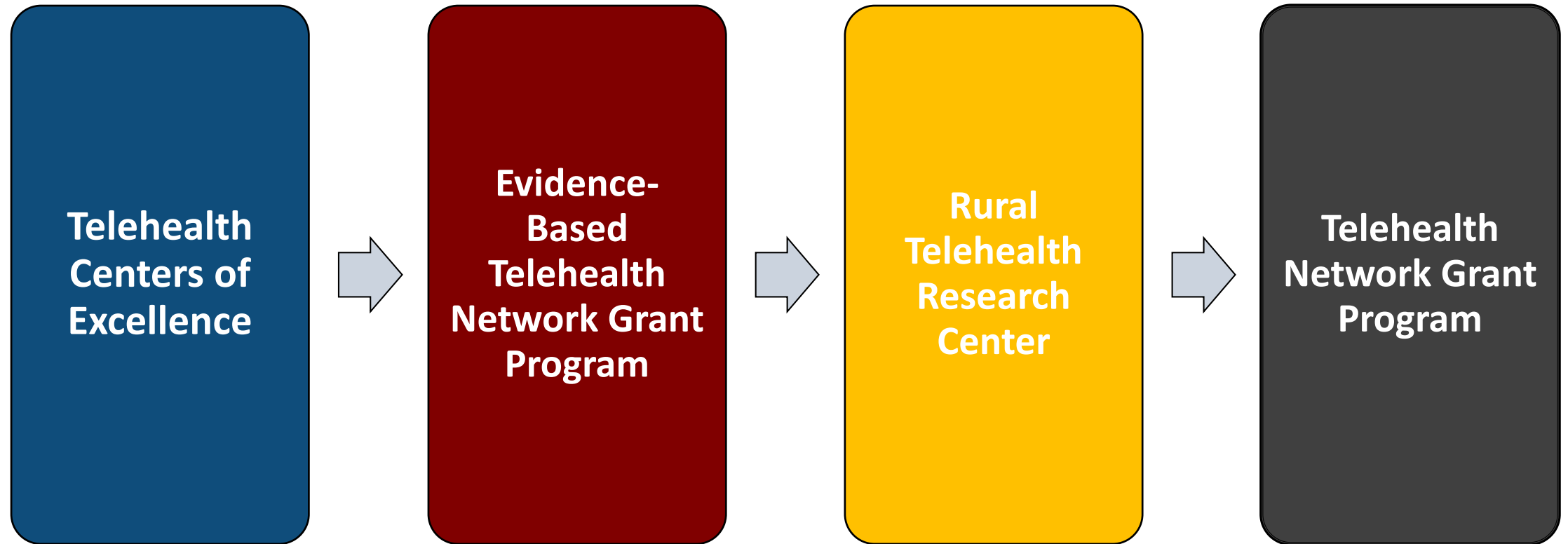
SEC. 711. [42 U.S.C. 912]





OAT

Continuum of Grant Programs



Telehealth Resource Centers



- The **Telehealth Resource Center Program** supports delivery of telehealth technical assistance.
- **National Policy Telehealth Resource Center**
- **National Technology Telehealth Resource Center**
- **Regional Telehealth Resource Centers**

In 2020, the Telehealth Resource Centers had over 10,000 technical assistance inquiries, a 350% increase over 2019

In 2020, the Telehealth Resource Centers reached 200,000 participants through 2,716 outreach events, a 200% increase over 2019





Evidence-Based Telehealth Network Program



The **Evidence-Based Tele-Behavioral Health Network Program** (EB THNP) used telehealth networks to increase access to behavioral health care services in rural and frontier communities. EB THNP evaluations of these efforts establish an evidence-base to assess the effectiveness of tele-behavioral health care for patients, providers, and payers.

PROJECT PERIOD: September 1, 2018- August 31, 2021



The purpose of the Fiscal Year 2021 **Evidence-Based Telehealth Network Program** is to use telehealth networks to improve direct-to-consumer telehealth services in rural and frontier communities and 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.

During 2019-2020, EB THNP served nearly 3,100 patients and saved nearly 734,000 miles in travel for care



Telehealth Network Grant Program



The purpose of the **Telehealth Network Grant Program** is to demonstrate the use of telehealth networks to improve healthcare services for medically underserved populations in urban, rural, and frontier communities.



The Fiscal Year 2020 Telehealth Network Grant Program focuses on **Tele-Emergency Department** with an emphasis on expanding emergency services for tele-stroke and telepsychiatry

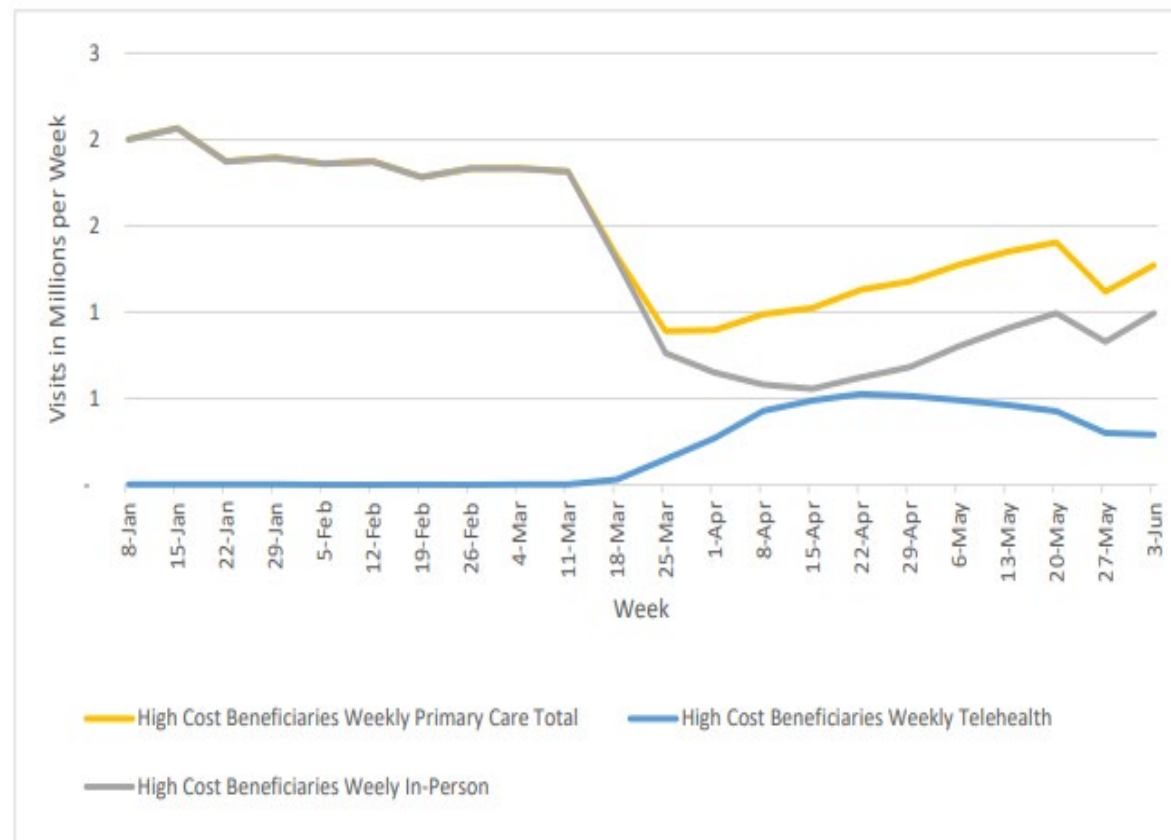
In 2018, HRSA's Telehealth Networks saved nearly
3.1 million miles
in travel for care

In 2019, HRSA's Telehealth Networks saved nearly
3.2 million miles
in travel for care

In 2020, HRSA's Telehealth Networks saved nearly
3.8 million miles
in travel for care

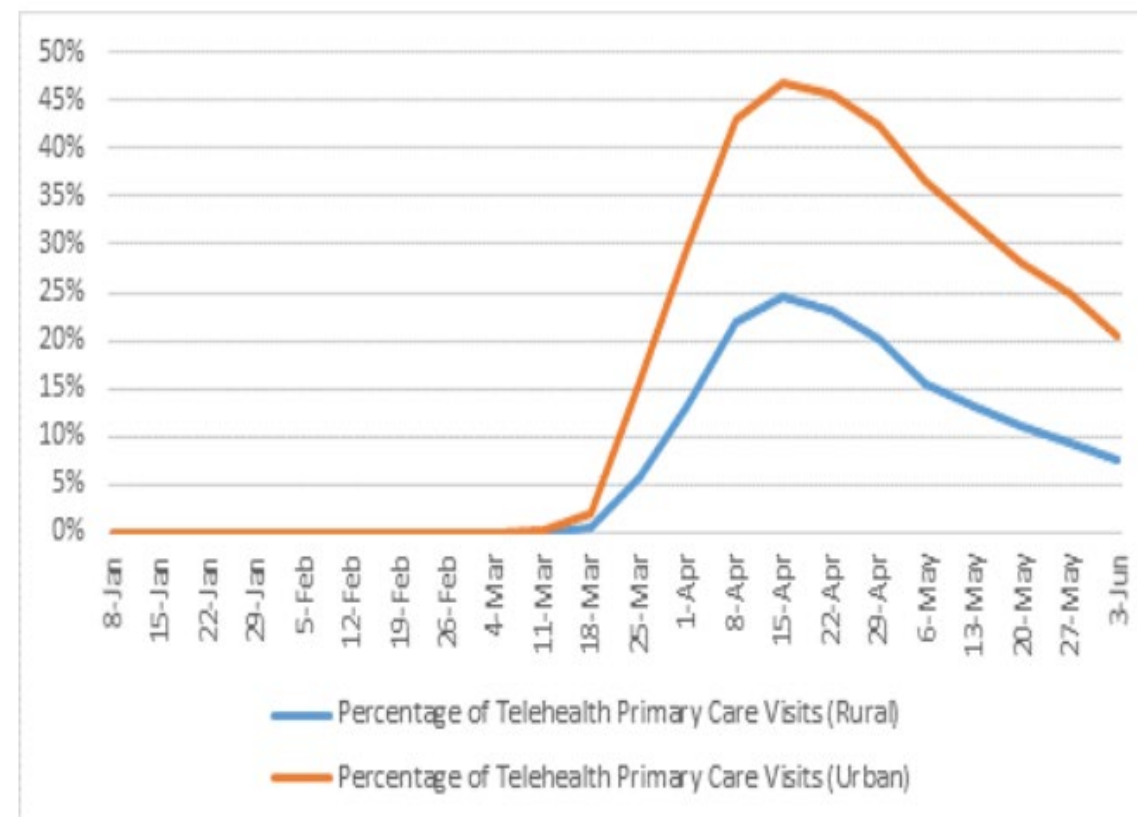
The Rise and Fall of Virtual Visits and Total Visits in 2020

Figure 3. Primary Care Visits for High Cost FFS Medicare Beneficiaries (visits in millions per week)



Source: Medicare claims data up to June 3rd, available as of June 16.

Figure 4. Telehealth Weekly Visits as a Percentage of Total FFS Medicare Primary Care Visits in Urban and Rural Counties



Source: Medicare claims data up to June 3rd, available as of June 16.

Digital Inclusion

“Digital Inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).”

[National Digital Inclusion Alliance](#)



Digital Inclusion

The 5 elements of Digital Inclusion are:

- 1) **affordable, robust broadband internet service;**
- 2) **internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user;**
- 3) **access to digital literacy training;**
- 4) **quality technical support; and**
- 5) **applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.**

Rural communities often experience barriers to these elements.

What Are OAT Programs Doing About Digital Inclusion?





Engage In Task Force Efforts

The Director of Telehealth at Marshfield Clinic (TNGP Grant Recipient) joined the Wisconsin 2020-2021 Governor's Task Force on Broadband.

The following Top Recommendations came out of this Task Force:

- Wisconsin should understand broadband adoption, and lack of adoption among households who haven't accessed internet, based on means, needs, connectivity, and prioritization
- Establish a statewide Digital Equity Fund operated by a nonprofit or similar organization with a mission to fund, **strengthen, and support digital inclusion activities and ideas** that lead to all Wisconsin residents having the access needed to fully participate in society



Provide Support Services For Clients And Providers

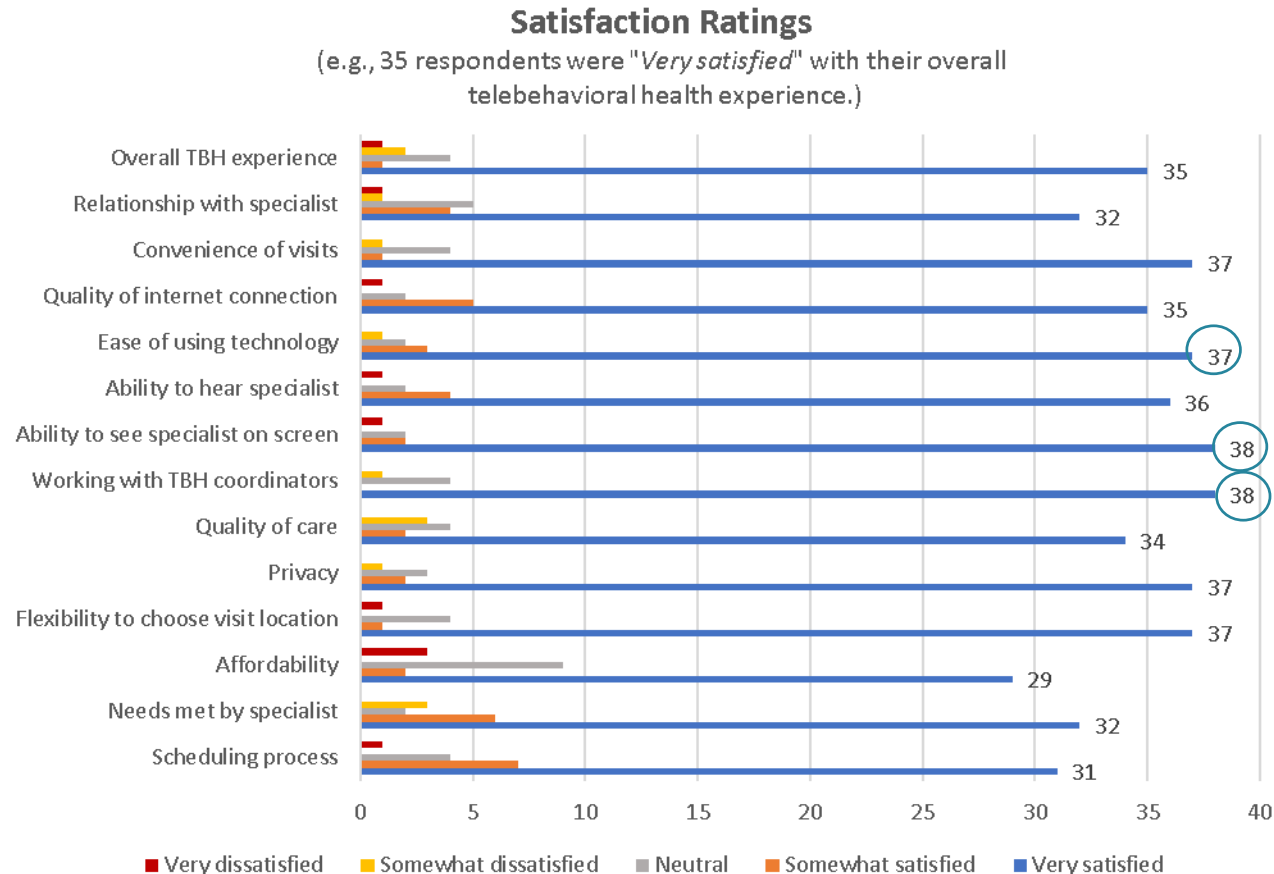
OAT programs have developed ways to assist the provider and client to maximize the time to provides services and address the clients health needs versus their technology needs.

- Set up a direct line to help clients with their technical issues accessing and utilizing virtual services
- Develop and provide a pre-appointment “tech check” with clients
- Encourage providers to recommend resources that are accessible, easily downloadable, and available for use via the patients cellphones
- Set-up training and support for providers to increase comfort



Telebehavioral Health Coordinators- Univ. of Kansas Health Systems

What patients say...



"...they do all the legwork. We don't have to do anything other than make the patient referral. Then they reach out to the patient after that. And it was just easy. That's the biggest surprise with how easy it was."

- CEO

"We cannot overstate how critical the coordinators are to the TBHN operating effectively at these sites."



Develop Promotional Resources For Telehealth Services

Brochures and fliers offer a way to communicate information to the client. This helps the client understand and learn more about telehealth services at their convenience.

Promotional resources should:

- Explain **what is telehealth** and the health service being provided
- Explain **what can and can't be done** through your telehealth services
- Answer commonly asked questions
- Explain how to schedule an appointment and **how to access telehealth services**
- **Be culturally competent** and available in languages that are spoken in the community





Texas A&M University Medical Center- Accessing Telehealth Services



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAqAdNxRUrM>





Telehealth Website



Telehealth.HHS.gov

- The trusted, timely, and one-stop resource for both patients and providers for everything they need to know about telehealth



In 2020, the website had over one million views and 400,000 unique users



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www.HRSA.gov



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