Celebrating healthcare knowledge, one webinar at a time

This year, things are looking different. COVID-19 has changed the way that we live, interact and communicate. We have had to shift the way we engage with our world into a more, well, digital landscape. Naturally, this also applies to healthcare. The need for virtual care is growing now more than ever and telehealth continues to be a viable solution. As virtual care has become more necessary, so is the virtual communication about healthcare.

In 2018, the Heartland Telehealth Resource Center presented something new and exciting: a series of webinars. This past March, they decided to re-introduce the concept with a special series that would span all of Summer 2020. People now had the opportunity to tune in and hear about a variety of topics. From updated federal/state telehealth policy to access for veterans in rural areas, these webinars could be accessed all from the comfort and safety of their homes. You could even have a cup of coffee, or cookie, in-hand. Not only are these webinars convenient and accessible, they also provide something that we’ve confirmed to be invaluable: new healthcare knowledge. So, in the celebration of learning, here are some interesting takeaways from July’s webinar:

- According to the HRSA website, the Flex Rural Veterans Health Access Program grant funds are "to be used to increase the delivery of mental health services or other health care services for veterans living in rural areas through the use of health information..."
The website states that these funds can be used in two focus areas: Telehealth Networks and Health Information Exchange Networks.

- Oklahoma has used this program to enhance the healthcare of rural veterans in western Oklahoma. The purpose is to improve the capacity of critical access hospitals and other rural healthcare organizations by developing veteran-focused curricula on services for mental health and substance/opioid use disorders, in addition to other conditions.

- There is a great need for these resources. About 10% of Oklahoma's population are veterans (300,000+ people). Of that number, almost half (40%) live in rural areas.

- According to the HRSA website, Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are “designations that indicate health care provider shortages in primary care, dental health; or mental health.” From the presentation, we learned that 56 Oklahoma counties are designated as HPSAs for primary care and 46 counties are designated as HPSAs for mental health care.

Next Tuesday, August 4th is the last webinar of the series. Mei Wa Kwong, JD, will be joining us from the Center for Connected Health Policy, where she is the current Executive Director. We are looking forward to hearing her provide an update on state and national policy. You can register for the webinar here.

---

**HTRC Webinar Series:**
**August 4, 2020**
**12-1 p.m. CST**

Facilitated by

**Mei Wa Kwong, JD**
Executive Director - Center for Connected Health Policy

Mei Wa Kwong joined CCHP in March 2010 as a Policy Associate and was named Executive Director in January 2018. Ms. Kwong leads the organization’s work on public policy issues as they impact telehealth on the state and federal level. She is also the project director for the National Telehealth Policy Resource Center. Ms. Kwong is a nationally recognized expert on telehealth policy.
In her current role at CCHP she works with the organization’s multitude of national and regional partners on telehealth issues and oversees CCHP’s projects, provides policy technical assistance to state and federal lawmakers, industry members, providers, consumers and others.

Register here.

The Heartland Telehealth Resource Center has presented a series of webinars on June 2, July 7 and August 4. Update will be provided on current regulation and policy changes in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

There is no cost to participate in the series, but registration is required. CME and continuing education is available.

REGISTER HERE

Funding Opportunities

FCC ANNOUNCES COVID-19 TELEHEALTH PROGRAM

New Program Will Provide $200 Million to Support Health Care Providers and Patients Across the Country During the Coronavirus Outbreak

The Federal Communications Commission’s Wireline Competition Bureau began accepting applications for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program on Monday, April 13, 2020. The COVID-19 Telehealth Program will provide $200 million in funding, appropriated by Congress as part of the CARES Act, to help health care providers furnish connected care services to patients at their homes or mobile locations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further information and the dedicated application portal are available at: [www.fcc.gov/covid19telehealth](http://www.fcc.gov/covid19telehealth)

Hospitals receive Emergency Oklahoma Universal Services Fund (OUSF) for Telemedicine bandwidth:

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has developed a COVID-19 OUSF Emergency Response Process to get funds approved for bandwidth increases. Hospitals, Schools, and Libraries currently receiving funding should reach out to their service provider directly to request an increase in bandwidth during the designated emergency period. Healthcare providers, if this change puts your Federal funding in jeopardy, we are hereby committing to cover your services. This is a public safety matter and cannot be delayed.

Upon request from a hospital for increased bandwidth under this program, OUSF Service Providers (telecommunications carrier) should immediately submit the form provided in the link below to request immediate approval of bandwidth increases for eligible entities. [https://www.occeweb.com/pu/OUSF/OUSF_COVID19.htm](https://www.occeweb.com/pu/OUSF/OUSF_COVID19.htm)

HTRC and ShowMe ECHO: TELEMEDICINE
Stay up-to-date with the latest changes in telemedicine with the Telemedicine ECHO offered by the HTRC and Missouri Telehealth Network (MTN) for providers in Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma every 2nd and 4th Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Topics include reimbursement, operations, regulations, best practices and more. It's a great way to learn from and collaborate with telehealth leaders and physician experts. It's no cost to participating sites or individuals.

Register at ShowMeEcho.org

COVID-19 ECHOs

**Missouri Telehealth Network** COVID-19 ECHO will meet via Zoom video conferencing every Monday from noon to 1 p.m. Anyone interested in learning how to protect, diagnose and treat Missouri patients with COVID-19, as well as how to protect their overall community, are encouraged to join. A multidisciplinary expert team led by Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Director Randall Williams, MD, will share the latest developments, answer questions, and discuss management of patient cases presented by participants. Register and learn more here.

**Oklahoma State University-Center for Health Sciences** has launched a COVID-19 Oklahoma Update ECHO to keep healthcare providers updated as the situation changes. This ECHO will be held weekly every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 8:30 a.m. until further notice. Please register here.

COVID-19 Resources

You can access the resources, here. Please share with others who could benefit from the information. We will continue to add and update resources as they come...