

Tele-Behavioral Health

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The Time is Right

- Psychiatric resources are scarce and hard to access in traditional models (Referral System, long wait times, patients get lost in shuffle)
- Under ACA, Primary Care Providers will quickly be overwhelmed with the additional patient volume and *increased* need for psychiatric consultation
- Telepsychiatry provides *rapid access* for providers and their patients to mental health professionals

Telepsychiatry/Tele-Behavioral Health A Virtual Frontier



What is Telemedicine?



Formally defined, telemedicine is the use of medical information exchanged from one site to another via electronic communications to improve a patient's clinical health status. Telemedicine includes a growing variety of applications and services using two-way video, email, smart phones, wireless tools and other forms of telecommunications technology.

Telehealth Terminology



Telepresence

- Telepresence refers to a set of technologies which allow a person to feel as if they were present, at a place other than their true location.
- Also referred to as Video-Conferencing (VC)

Telemedicine

- Use of electronic communications to exchange medical information from one site to another in regard to ongoing patient care management
- E-health, Virtual Clinics

Telepsychiatry

- Telepsychiatry is an application of Telemedicine to the field of Psychiatry.
- Also know as Telemental Health or e-Psychiatry.
- *Most successful of all the telemedical applications to date.*

Benefits of Tele-Behavioral Health



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- **Improved Access** –Telemedicine improve access to patients but it also allows physicians and health facilities to expand their reach, beyond their own offices. Given the provider shortages throughout the world--in both rural and urban areas--telemedicine has a unique capacity to increase service to millions of new patients.
 - **Cost Efficiencies** – Reducing or containing the cost of healthcare is one of the most important reasons for funding and adopting telehealth technologies. Telemedicine has been shown to reduce the cost of healthcare and increase efficiency through better management of chronic diseases, shared health professional staffing, reduced travel times, and fewer or shorter hospital stays.

Benefits of Tele-Behavioral Health



- **Improved Quality** – Studies have consistently shown that the quality of healthcare services delivered via telemedicine are as good those given in traditional in-person consultations. In some specialties, particularly in mental health and ICU care, telemedicine delivers a superior product, with greater outcomes and patient satisfaction.
- **Patient Demand** – Consumers want telemedicine. The greatest impact of telemedicine is on the patient, their family and their community. Using telemedicine technologies reduces travel time and related stresses for the patient. Over the past 15 years study after study has documented patient satisfaction and support for telemedical services. Such services offer patients the access to providers that might not be available otherwise, as well as medical services without the need to travel long distances.

Source: <http://www.americantelemed.org/about-telemedicine/what-is-telemedicine>

What has slowed growth in Telemedicine/Telepsychiatry?



- Desktop or location-dedicated videoconferencing equipment
- High expense for videoconferencing equipment, software, licensing
- Slow/erratic internet connectivity with low bandwidth
- Lack of portability due to erratic wireless connectivity
- Provider buy-in to new patient care model
- Shortages of specialist providers (i.e. Psychiatrists)
- Questionable reimbursement from CMS and private carriers
- HIPPA compliance issues

What has driven rapid growth in Telemedicine/Telepsychiatry?



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- User friendly desktop/laptop/tablet platforms
 - High speed internet connectivity with increased bandwidth
 - T1 dedicated lines *versus* broadband (cable) *versus* satellite
 - Portability with wireless connectivity
 - smart phones, tablets
 - Initiatives to reach rural and distant patients (ACA)
 - Distance learning initiatives/Collaboration
 - Shortages of specialist providers (i.e. Psychiatrists)
 - Increasing reimbursement from CMS and private carriers
 - Better security to insure HIPPA compliance

Rural Telepsychiatry/Tele-Behavioral Health

Mental Health Care on the Move



- 60% of rural Americans live in a designated mental health professional shortage area.
- Telepsychiatry can help redistribute scarce resources to rural communities.
- Providers and patients can gain *rapid access* to much needed mental health services without either long waiting periods or significant travel costs.

Shortage of Psychiatrists in NC



- The Sheps Center for Health Services Research at UNC Chapel Hill recently released data for 2011 on the number of physician specialists by county.
 - Twenty-eight counties in North Carolina do not have a psychiatrist (compared to 30 the year before in 2010), and an additional 18 counties have only one psychiatrist.
 - Seventy counties do not have a child psychiatrist, and an additional 14 only have one.
 - Only six counties have a geriatric psychiatrist. Only five counties have addiction psychiatrists, and only 13 counties have physicians specializing in addiction and chemical dependency.

Tele-Behavioral Health Models



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- Psychiatry Consults
 - Traditional Psych Assessments
 - ED Consults
 - Curbside Consults
 - Comprehensive Clinical Assessments
 - Creation of Virtual “Care Teams”
 - IMPACT Model
 - SBIRT

North Carolina Initiatives



- North Carolina Statewide Telepsychiatry Project (NCsTEP)
 - Albermarle Health System, ECU Telemedicine Center
 - General Assembly Funded
 - 57 Community Hospitals, in over 80 counties.
- Sandhills Telepsychiatry Project
 - Funded by Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
 - Coordinated by Community Care of the Sandhills
 - 31 Medical Clinics
 - 7 Counties
- Carolinas Health System
 - Virtual Teams
- Outpatient Behavioral Health Clinics
 - Intragency

Resources



Helpful Websites:

<http://www.americantelemed.org/>

<http://www.matrc.org/>

Description of NC-STeP

<http://eventmobi.com/api/events/6901/documents/download/62ce156d-4886-4955-8dba-854a15d2db5d.pdf/as/Saeed%20-%20NC%20Statewide%20Telepsychiatry%20Program.pdf>

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