

UCEDD Directors Meeting

January 27th 4-6pm ET

Breakout Room Notes

Breakout Room Topic:

Emerging Issues around Telehealth and Addressing Disparities in Access

What You're Seeing:

- One challenge is getting the equipment, internet, etc. to families who need it.
 - Another barrier is training on how to use the technology, we cannot just provide the equipment and forget about the training on how to use it.
- Families are having trouble finding time to help their children learn and be productive in online school, especially for children that cannot learn on their own.
 - Seeing variations in schools that are online, hybrid, or in-person (equity issues- which students/districts come back, funding for PPE, etc.).
- Seeing variation in billing codes for evaluation under AAC and telehealth reimbursement (depending on location).
- People not understanding how to use technology that they have access to
- Chicago teachers union is resisting and going on strike to avoid reopening school
- OR – lots of folks using cell phones, but internet is an issue

What You're Doing:

- CO – worked with primary care providers to see if folks can go to local primary care providers to set up telehealth visit with specialists
- IL – DD Council gave \$ to the Arc to purchase equipment and internet access
- KS – devices and hotspots and training being provided
- CO – opened schools for kids in special ed
- Data on school safety in the pandemic is showing that schools are safe when following precautions
- MN- there is a merging of researchers and clinical professors coming together at MN; brought foundation in earlier to raise money to redo this building/take telehealth lab (only clinical services in UCEDD) and expand it; received a gift focused on telehealth (we call it tele-outreach); this is a good time to go to philanthropic entities in this space to improve telehealth
- ID: Been using smart technology for autism assessments for past 5 years; technology is so important in this past year – we have families sending in videos, it's been reliable for us; we may use this technology for intervention service as well
 - We call it tele-education, but really like the term 'tele-outreach'

- Call it tele-outreach due to regional capacity building; going in to provider organizations and teaching them about assessments and interventions, positive behavior support, etc.
- I think we will see more research opportunities via ACL; hopefully more from the employment perspective, using it as capacity building; the CMS Intervention Center has a lot of money, but it sometimes feels we are in wilderness with what they fund; we need more on emerging models and best practices
 - Need intentional advocacy around it, more competition
 - We see HRSA taking clinical approach (ex: AAP)
 - MN: I worry about service delivery – what are the outcomes? Model produced? Providers doing it in a reactionary way, not a tested intervention that it works; providers getting the same amount of money doing it virtually as they are in-person
 - ID: we don't have enough providers, haven't heard of provider doing telehealth/using zoom; might be valuable as a check-in and relationship building, but can't fix anything virtually
 - MN: It's really the teaching and training that people are doing; online education works better but outcomes not as good; some kids are medically involved as well. So much of this reactionary, throwing reimbursement to keep people solvent
- MN- we are doing well in employment areas of MN – serving 1,500 people, moving to evidence-based employment strategies (MRCI)
- ID- no revenue generating in ID
- ND – telehealth generate income for them, increase # of evaluations; connecting more and increasing access to services in rural areas

What Next?

- Thinking about ways to sustain this work post COVID-19.
 - Using telehealth has been successful and there is a want to continue this work.
- Looking to AUCD for advocacy on this- want to maintain new regulations around telehealth.
- For future discussion, need more information on ECHO training and telehealth models merging