



IDAHO TELEHEALTH COUNCIL GOAL TWO SUBCOMMITTEE

Telehealth Expansion Plan

Background and Introduction

The Idaho Telehealth Council Goal Two Subcommittee was charged with developing a telehealth expansion plan to operationalize and expand telehealth services in rural communities as part of the Statewide Healthcare Innovation Plan (SHIP). This effort includes integrating telehealth in Patient Centered Medical Homes (PCMH) to improve access to behavioral health and specialty care and establishing telehealth in Community Health Emergency Medical Service (CHEMS) programs. The Subcommittee consists of over 30 Idaho stakeholders, including representation from various Idaho Department of Health and Welfare divisions, hospitals, associations, health districts, fire departments, and other key partners from across the state.

SHIP telehealth goals include the following:

1. Establish rural telehealth capacity in 18 PCMHs across a range of specialty services.
2. Establish rural telehealth capacity in 18 PCMHs to provide behavioral health services.
3. Establish telehealth services in 6 CHEMS programs.

SHIP resources to support the goals include the following:

- On-site and virtual training, technical assistance, and coaching
- Equipment

On November 10, 2015, the Subcommittee met for a facilitated day-long planning meeting to identify key action steps necessary to expand telehealth services in PCMHs and CHEMS programs. The Subcommittee meeting notes and information was presented to the Idaho Telehealth Council on December 11, 2015. A high-level summary of the expansion plan is presented below and details are found in the Subcommittee notes at: <http://ship.idaho.gov/workgroups/telehealthcouncil>.

Overarching themes and observations from the day-long planning meeting include the following:

1. Developing and implementing a telehealth readiness assessment for PCMHs will help identify opportunities and barriers for establishing or expanding telehealth programs.
2. Providing training, coaching, mentoring, best practice resources, and billing education are needed to support program development in the PCMH.
3. Establishing telehealth in Community Health Emergency Medical Services (CHEMS) programs will require additional research, training, and resource development.

Telehealth Expansion Plan for Idaho

The Idaho Telehealth Council Goal Two Subcommittee recommends an expansion plan that includes the following elements and action steps:

Phase One - Assessment

1. Conduct a PCMH medical-health neighborhood needs assessment to identify the community's healthcare needs, services gaps, and barriers that may potentially be addressed through telehealth.

2. Conduct a readiness assessment to measure the PCMH or CEMS readiness to develop and implement a new telehealth program or expand a current program; the assessment will also identify unmet needs to establishing or expanding a telehealth program and may include:
 - a. Availability of telehealth policies and procedures, capacity to identify a PCMH or CEMS champion/telehealth coordinator, evaluation of technical infrastructure (equipment and sufficient bandwidth), determination of patient need for additional healthcare services, availability and capacity of providers to deliver needed healthcare services via telehealth, availability of funding and reimbursement opportunities, and determining resource needs.

Phase Two - Develop Telehealth Program & Evaluation Plan:

1. Create a detailed telehealth program plan, which may include a telehealth integration plan, communications strategy, revenue model, training and education, marketing, and technical support.
2. Develop an evaluation plan, specific to the telehealth program's development phase, to monitor the program, and provide quality assurance and risk management.

Phase Three - Implement & Support:

1. Implement or enhance an existing telehealth program, including the purchase of equipment, technical assistance, training and education, and peer learning or mentoring opportunities.
2. Provide assistance with billing and reimbursement, credentialing and licensing, and offer practice standards guidance.

Phase Four - Evaluate & Monitor:

1. Evaluate the telehealth program with metrics such as utilization rates, user satisfaction, cost effectiveness, patient outcomes, potential patient cost savings due to reduced travel for distant services, and new patient populations.
2. Use evaluation data to enhance existing services and improve program performance.
3. Continue to monitor the telehealth program and provide ongoing professional development.

The Subcommittee acknowledged significant challenges and barriers to telehealth adoption and expansion in Idaho and the need for intentional and conscientious oversight of expansion plan implementation.