

Telehealth Research Recap: Workforce



Integrating Telehealth into Clinician Education and Clinical Practice

The integration of telehealth into education has significantly evolved for medical professionals.^{1,2} This is marked by the acceleration of virtual care. This shift is a profound transformation in health care delivery, emphasizing the importance of accessibility. The adoption of telehealth has notably increased, with a significant percentage of health care professionals incorporating it into their practice.^{3,4} This reflects broad acceptance of telehealth.^{5,6} The movement towards telehealth necessitates a reevaluation of educational curricula to ensure that health care professionals are prepared to utilize these technologies effectively.⁷ There is a critical need for continued training in telehealth to fully realize telehealth's benefits and impacts on the health care workforce.

Training Health Care Professionals Using Telehealth

Telehealth technology is transformative in training health care professionals. Provider-to-provider telehealth enhances the dissemination of best practices and evidence-based strategies with the goal of contributing to a more competent and responsive health care workforce. For example, provider-to-provider telehealth gives clinicians specialized knowledge and skills for addressing complex health needs.^{8,9,10,11} Through virtual training sessions and workshops, professionals can engage with experts and peers from diverse geographic locations, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Research indicates that virtual technical assistance provides numerous benefits, including expanded reach, improved efficiency, and decreased cost.¹²

Recruiting Providers for Telehealth Services

Telehealth's appeal in recruiting health care providers is multifaceted.¹³ Recruiting health care

providers for telehealth services entails finding skilled providers who are comfortable and adept at providing services via telehealth. Another consideration when recruiting providers for telehealth services is licensing across state lines. Interstate licensure is complex and involves navigating state-specific licensure requirements and ensuring that clinicians meet diverse regulatory standards.¹⁴ Retention is also important and requires ongoing support. Overall, telehealth may provide enhanced flexibility and help organizations strengthen their health care workforce.¹⁵

Increasing Access to Behavioral Health Workers

The utilization of telehealth to increase access to behavioral health professionals marks a significant advancement in enhancing health care accessibility, particularly in underserved communities.^{16,17,18} One study found that telehealth helped address behavioral health workforce issues and increased access to bilingual providers.¹⁹ Telehealth in alternative settings, such as schools, has become increasingly essential in addressing medical and behavioral health clinician shortages.²⁰ One study shows how a university partnered with rural schools and community health organizations to increase access to pediatric telebehavioral health services.²¹ Figure 1 highlights the pivotal role of a community health worker in a telehealth program.²²



Figure 1. Role of the Community Health Worker in Telehealth Program²³

Resources

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