

Wyoming Telehealth Network

June Telehealth Spotlight

Wendy Warren, BA

Did you know mini-grants are now available to help Wyoming families offset the costs of technology for their children's telehealth medical appointments? Overcoming obstacles to telehealth can be challenging, but Wendy Warren, Program Manager at the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND), found a way to help. By applying for a grant to Family Voices, she was able to secure funding to provide devices to families who need them to access telehealth. But after working with families who needed access, it seemed that there was one more barrier to surmount—internet access. The team at WIND, including Kayleigh Schermerhorn (pictured here with helpful Verizon® Wireless staff) went to work to find an innovative solution to address this need with the funds available. The result? WIND now has nineteen Verizon® tablets with pre-paid cellular data service to provide direct support to Wyoming families in need of telehealth access. Read more here about how to access these devices.



1. What are some benefits of telehealth?

Wendy Warren: Telehealth is the use of technology to provide health care at a distance. This usually takes the form of video visits, but it can also include remote patient monitoring or phone calls. Telehealth visits are similar in many ways to in-person appointments.

BENEFITS:

- Less travel
- Savings on travel costs
- Keeps you and your family in the community
- Less time away from work and school
- Less waiting time
- Less worry about weather and road conditions Increased ability to receive care, and quicker access to care Increased access to specialty care
- Better coordination with and between primary care doctors and specialists
- Allows for access to care during COVID-19

2. What inspired you to apply for a grant for this program?

Wendy: Many families in Wyoming are not familiar with video conferencing platforms that are typically utilized for telehealth visits with health care providers, educators, and other service providers. Additionally, the rural and frontier nature of Wyoming severely limits access to specialty care, making telehealth critical for access to services. We wanted to provide additional resources about the effectiveness of telehealth services to help families understand the safety and positive outcomes and devices and data to support telehealth appointments.

3. What is the criteria for Wyoming families to participate?

Wendy: Criteria for Wyoming families to participate:

- Participate in 2 online training sessions
- Demonstrated need (child with special health care needs, upcoming therapy sessions and/or medical appointments that could be completed via telehealth)

4. How do I apply?

Wendy: To apply, you can contact me at 307-343-2646.

5. What can I expect after I apply and participate in the required online trainings?

Wendy: Eligible families will receive a Samsung Tab A with 60 days of Verizon service. After the initial 60 days, families can choose to refill the prepaid tablet or convert to a Verizon plan.

Additional Information on Emergency Broadband Benefits:

The Federal Communications Commission has launched a temporary program to help families and households struggling to afford Internet service during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Emergency Broadband Benefit provides a discount of up to \$50 per month toward broadband service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers.

Eligible households can enroll through a participating broadband provider or directly with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) using an online or mail in application.

You can learn more about the benefit, including eligibility and enrollment information, by visiting www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit, or by calling 833-511-0311.

6. What if I live in a different part of the state?

Wendy: Any family in the state of Wyoming is eligible.

7. What if I do not have broadband access at my house?

Wendy: The following are great resources if you do not have broadband access at your house:

- **Everyone On** can help to provide affordable internet services for you and your family: <https://www.everyoneon.org>
- **Comcast Internet Essentials:** <https://www.internetessentials.com>
- **Human I-T:** <https://www.human-i-t.org/request-internet>
- Your Local Library
- Local Faith-based Center Community organizations

Need to learn more about the nuts and bolts of telehealth before you apply? Check out this informative resource: <https://familyvoices.org/telehealth/curriculum/>