

# Wyoming Telehealth Network

## February Provider Spotlight

1. When did you first hear about telehealth? How did you feel about it then? How do you feel about it now?

Having dedicated the past decade to working in rural communities, I have been attuned to the advantages of telehealth services and the positive impact they can have in such areas. I am pleased to observe that acceptance of telehealth has grown significantly in recent years, bringing about positive changes, and expanded opportunities for healthcare delivery in these communities.

2. When did you begin offering telehealth services? What prompted the need to offer these services?

VOANR has predominantly employed telehealth services with a focus on medical appointments, with therapy services being relatively restricted. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic marked a substantial expansion in telehealth utilization, fostering a broader acceptance and recognition among clients and community partners that telehealth is an efficacious means of accessing treatment and participating in the recovery process.

3. What motivates you to continue offering telehealth services?

Access to care is the greatest motivation for continuing telehealth services. Many clients outside of town can access and benefit from the same level and quality of care as their counterparts who live closer to the clinic in town, without incurring additional costs in fuel, time, energy. Furthermore, the flexibility of telehealth enables us to efficiently deploy clinical expertise across diverse geographic areas, enabling specialized providers to assist clients outside their immediate community. This strategic use of telehealth also optimizes staffing resources, allowing our organization to effectively support and serve in underserved communities.

4. What is your proudest accomplishment with telehealth?

We have received positive feedback and commendation from our community partners for the swift adaptation to the telehealth model, which has greatly benefited the mutual clients we serve. Additionally, we have played a pivotal role in assisting and providing resources to our community partners, such as hospitals and jails, enabling them to effectively implement and utilize telehealth in collaboration with our organization. This collaborative effort has strengthened our overall ability to provide comprehensive support to our shared clientele.

5. What advice would you give patients wanting to try telehealth?

Ask questions. If you have concerns or aren't sure how to use the telehealth platform, ask for help or clarification. It's important that you can access the service in a way

that's meaningful and supports your needs.

6. [What advice would you give providers wanting to start offering telehealth?](#)

For providers looking to start offering telehealth services, my advice would be to invest in educating yourself on best practices in delivering telehealth. This investment will not only increase your awareness of the nuances of virtual care but also boost your confidence and competence in providing treatment in this manner. Familiarize yourself with the technology you'll be using, stay informed about privacy and security considerations, and actively seek training or resources to enhance your telehealth skills.

7. [What was the biggest barrier in providing telehealth services? Have you overcome it?](#)

As beneficial as telehealth is, it is also critical to remember that it is not the best fit for everyone. Factors like access to technology, personal preferences, or the nature of specific medical conditions can impact the suitability of telehealth. It's crucial to maintain a balanced perspective, understanding that while telehealth offers convenience and accessibility, traditional in-person care remains necessary for certain situations, ensuring a comprehensive and personalized approach to healthcare that accommodates diverse needs and preferences.

8. [How do you think implementing telehealth now will affect how things will be done at your organization after the pandemic is over?](#)

At VOANR we have and will continue using telehealth as an option in treatment. It allows us to maximize our resources to such an extent that it has now become an indispensable tool and resource for our organization and clients.

9. [Is there anything you learned the hard way in telehealth implementation?](#)

An important lesson in providing telehealth services is adjusting your therapeutic style to account for more limited access to the full spectrum of body language. It's incumbent upon the provider to be more inquisitive and elaborate more on what they are doing in a session as it's not always readily apparent.

10. [Do you have any telehealth hacks or tricks?](#)

Utilizing the full functionality of telehealth systems is key! For example, with Zoom, using the "Personal Meeting Room" feature can significantly save time by eliminating the need to set up and generate new meeting IDs for each appointment. Additionally, incorporating co-hosts enhances flexibility during meetings, fostering collaborative and seamless teamwork. These features not only streamline the process but also contribute to a more effective and adaptable telehealth experience for both providers and clients.