OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO TELEHEALTH ADOPTION

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Wyoming Telehealth Network

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Telehealth History

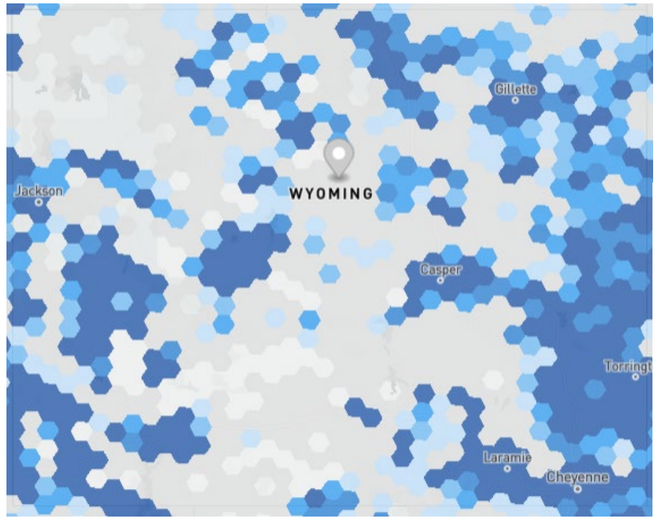
- The Albany Community Health Clinic began providing telehealth in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

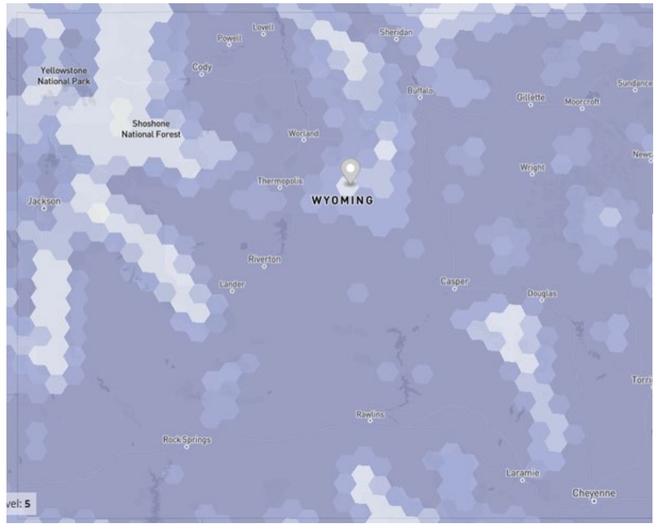
- Primary Care and Behavioral Health Services

- Barriers we Faced:
  - Concern about reimbursement
  - Privacy
  - Safety


BROADBAND AND CONNECTIVITY
ISSUES

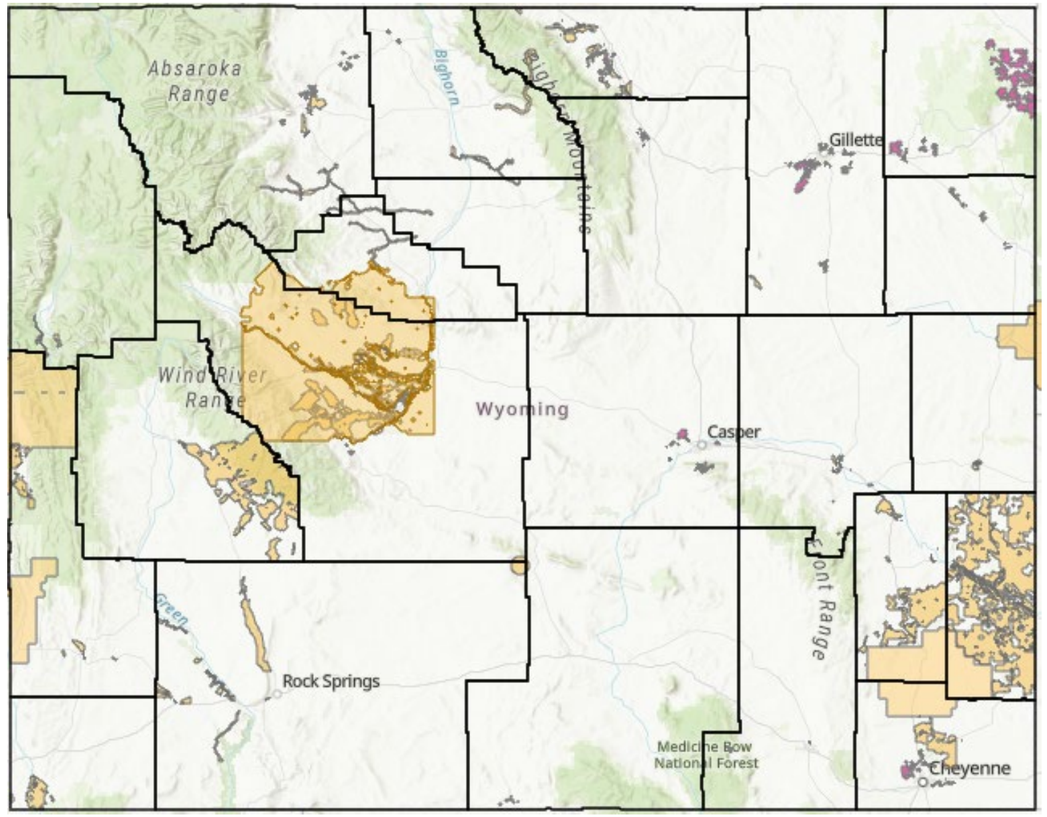
Broadband and Connectivity





Location Summary | FCC National Broadband Map

Broadband and Connectivity



Wyoming Broadband Availability Map - Wyoming BEAD Program

Category	Percentage
Served	81%
Underserved	5%
Unserved	13%

Broadband and Connectivity

AVAILABILITY	Trusted friend/family member with internet access Telehealth Booth Local Clinic – Originating Site
ACCESS	Lifeline - Provides discounts (minimal) for a variety of situations Explore all possible service providers to find the lowest price available Explore Cell Phone assistance programs
POOR CONNECTION	Explore platforms that allow for flexibility in bandwidth usage to improve connection

Broadband and Connectivity - Troubleshooting

- Have a backup platform for telehealth
- Before starting telehealth, ensure that the clinic you will be connecting from has a reliable connection
- Provide patients clear instructions on how to access the platform on the day of their appointment
- If the connection is poor, have the patient or provider try moving to a different secure location if possible
- Flexibility is key


REGULATORY CHALLENGES

Regulatory Challenges

FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS	Compliance with varying laws can complicate telehealth services. Understand your state laws. Keep track of DEA regulations.
PATIENT LOCATION ISSUES	Practitioners must be licensed in the state(s) in which their patient is located at the time of the visit. Always confirm patient's location before providing services.
PAYER COMMUNICATION /KNOWLEDGE	Effective communication and knowledge of payers is essential for reimbursement success. Ensure you have someone who is knowledgeable of Payers and can keep a pulse on changes. Balance no-show vs. telehealth collection rate
HIPAA	Ensure your telehealth platform is HIPAA compliant (Zoom, AthenaOne)
MALPRACTICE INSURANCE	Ensure malpractice insurance covers services rendered via telehealth.
ORGANIZATION POLICY/PROCEDURE	Before implementing telehealth, ensure a robust policy/procedure is in place, which considers all regulations from above, and anything else deemed necessary from an organizational perspective.

REGULATORY RESOURCES

BE SURE TO SIGN UP FOR UPDATES THROUGH THE FOLLOWING PLATFORMS!

WYOMING TELEHEALTH NETWORK	https://wyomingtelehealth.org/enrollment/
HHS	https://telehealth.hhs.gov/providers
DEA	https://deadiversion.usdoj.gov/new.html
INSURANCE COMPANIES	Websites will vary, but you should sign up for notifications for any payers your practice works with.


Digital Literacy
&
Patient Demographic Needs

Digital Literacy

AGE	**Do not assume** just because of patient demographics, there is an inability/unwillingness to use telehealth Provide an easy-to-use platform
LACK OF AWARENESS/ UNDERSTANDING	Provide instructions for connecting by either building them into the EMR or building an Email template with video links Frequent encouragement to use telehealth, especially from providers Provide extra time/resources if available
FEELING OVERWHELMED	Encourage computer training classes if patients are receptive Ensure clinic staff are comfortable navigating the platform

Patient Demographic Needs

Language	Provide translation services for non-English speaking patients to enhance communication Integrate translation services into telehealth platform if possible Have a device set-up with translation service available for use (Tablet)
Disability	Ensure platforms are accessible for individuals with disabilities to promote inclusivity Chat feature for hearing or vision impaired patients Visual resources (screen sharing) to help with patient understanding
Family/ Caregiver Participation	Encourage caregiver involvement in telehealth appointments for increased patient support.


PRIVACY/ SECURITY

Privacy/ Security

Patient Location	Ensure telehealth policy/procedure addresses how to handle Build into telehealth instructions Utilize chat function
Provider Location	Provide resources such as headphones/headset Utilize exam rooms for patient visit
Cybersecurity	Ensure your telehealth platform meets HIPAA cybersecurity requirements


SAFETY

PATIENT SAFETY

PATIENT LOCATION	ENSURE PATIENT LOCATION IS VERIFIED PRIOR TO THE START OF THE VISIT
SCREENING TOOLS	CAREFULLY TIME SCREENING TOOLS IF THESE ARE BEING DONE IN ADVANCE
BE PREPARED FOR SAFETY PLANNING/ ACTION	HAVE A PLAN FOR ENSURING PATIENT SAFETY IN THE EVENT PATIENT IS DEEMED A RISK TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS KEEP PATIENT CONNECTED AND HAVE A BACKUP PLAN FOR IF THEY DISCONNECT


OTHER BARRIERS

Collecting Paperwork and Payments

COLLECTING REGISTRATION PAPERWORK	Implement digital forms - Integrate into EMR, Secure Email Service "Pre-Register" patients
SHARING RESOURCES/ DOCUMENTS	Ensure seamless sharing of documents through email or other electronic means
TRACKING/ OVERSIGHT	Build paperwork/payment collection into policy/procedure and follow normal tracking/auditing procedures

Addressing reluctance

- Ongoing training and support are crucial for successful telehealth adoption among patients and providers.
- Designate Telehealth "Champions" to lead the clinic through the transition
- Acknowledge the limitations of telehealth
- Understand that telehealth is a tool, rather than an expectation/standard

Balancing need for in-person appointments

- Determine barriers preventing the patient from coming in-person
- Ensure there is flexibility within your policy/procedure and set that as the expectation
- Work with your providers to determine what is appropriate to see via telehealth
- Utilize resources local to the patient to collect vitals
- Communicate expectations with patients

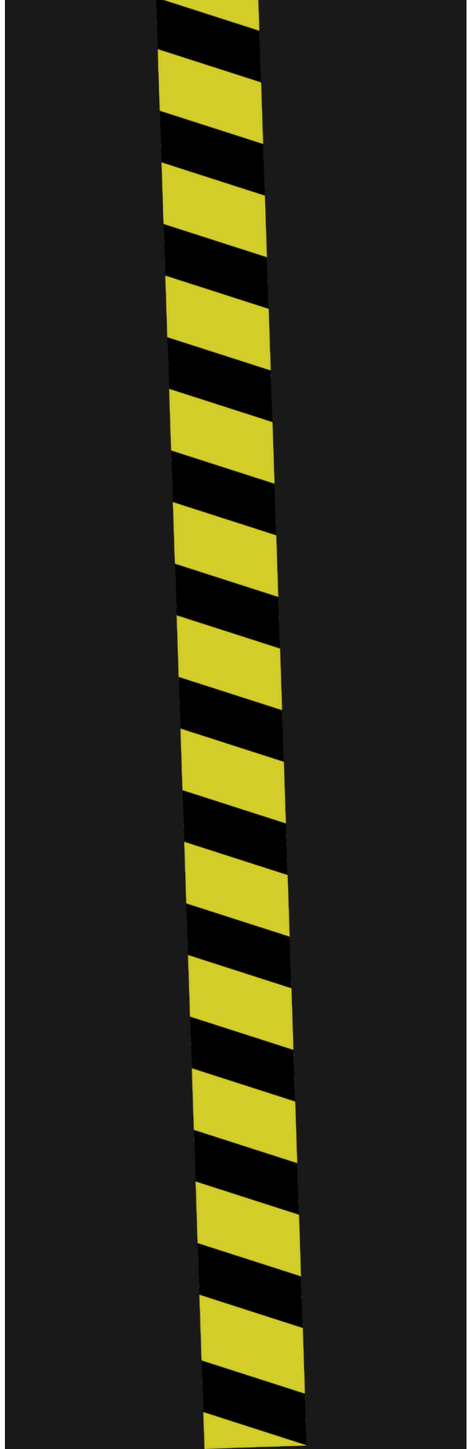
Key Takeaways

- Establish a clear, but flexible, policy/procedure for Telehealth
  - Ensure all regulatory requirements are built into this
  - Work with your providers on this to establish expectations

- Communicate Effectively with Patients regarding the change/expectation and provide ample resources

- Set reasonable expectations for telehealth
  - It is a tool, not a standard
  - Telehealth does not replace in-person care, but does complement it

- Ensure clinic staff are comfortable with the platform



Thank you for attending!

Please reach out with any questions or feedback-

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