



Pottsboro Virtual Health



SaferCare
Texas



OVERVIEW

Some Texans travel more than 100 miles to the nearest hospital, illuminating the poor rural healthcare access challenges. Complicating this dilemma, many Texas Rural communities lack broadband access, limiting telehealth as a viable option. Telehealth, or telemedicine, is the use of electronic information and telecommunication technology to provide healthcare when clinicians and patients cannot be in the same place at the same time. This model provides access to healthcare when distance or transportation are barriers. All one needs is a wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) connection. Due to “shelter in place” orders to mitigate SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) disease spread, clinicians leveraged this technology to safely continue seeing patients.

FACTS AT A GLANCE



80% of Texas
is comprised of rural land



64
Texas counties
do not have
a hospital



25
Texas counties
lack primary
care physicians

50% of future Texas clinicians

complete their residencies yet opt to
practice outside the Lonestar State

Texas poverty rates



High school students who did not graduate





Our objective is to improve health care access in rural communities by designing safe virtual health rooms within libraries.

Poverty, poor education, clinician shortages, and poor access to care produce a significant community/financial burden in rural areas. Providing telehealth access in rural libraries is the catalyst needed to provide health care and health literate patient education to these underserved communities.

Libraries in Texas rural areas are frequent community hubs for information, education, and other basic needs. We partnered with Dianne Connery, the Pottsboro Librarian, and our Health Science Center (HSC) partners to design a virtual health room for patient telehealth visits.

THE FOUR P'S

Success was dependent on targeted partner collaboration, choosing a place, renovating the room, and providing disinfection guidance. **The four P's** proved strategic in providing a safe, effective space for virtual patient/provider encounters.



Partnerships



Place



Preparation



Purification



PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration with community stakeholders was vital in fulfilling the promises of this project and preparing a safe venue for virtual health participants (patients). The Pottsboro Area Library, under Dianne Connery's leadership, received a **\$20,000 COVID-19 outreach grant** from the Network of the National Library of Medicine's South-Central Region to implement programs to help navigate the pandemic.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

The **HSC Library** hosts a regional office of the **US National Library of Medicine** and that office is tasked to support the health information needs of the citizens of a seven-state region, according to Dan Burgard, director of the NLM office. "One way we do that is by funding organizations with creative program ideas for meeting their community's health information needs. The entrepreneurship

of the **Pottsboro Library** shone through in our discussions with them and they were a slam dunk for us to assist them with funding for the purchase of equipment to support a telemedicine room in their facility. We were also very excited to be able to connect the library with the safety and patient care operations at HSC so that the project could really take off with professional backing."

POTTSBORO LIBRARY

"When the need for online health care in a rural community emerged during the pandemic, the library staff attempted to find programs to use as a model. Because there was very little information to be found, a partnership with The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth was formed to create a pilot program. The library has

the space, the fastest internet connection in town, and staff with digital literacy skills to assist participants. The HSC has the resources to plan, create protocols, and handle logistics. The two sides of the equation work together to improve healthcare outcomes in an underserved community", says Pottsboro librarian, Dianne Connery.

HSC SAFERCARE OF TEXAS

SaferCare Texas provided subject matter expertise with the virtual health room renovation. The environment included safety measures for patients and library patrons, and essential equipment for clinicians to conduct accurate assessments. "We wanted to make sure all patients receive the best

care while providing them with a safe and welcoming experience," said John Sims, Director of SaferCare Texas, the patient safety division at HSC. "We worked with Dianne to make sure the ventilation, lighting and technology was up to date and infection control measures were in place."

HSC HEALTH

HSC Health offered a dedicated, private appointment space at the library for Pottsboro community members to connect with health care providers virtually at HSC. These providers manage chronic conditions, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, conduct wellness screenings and offer

acute visits for issues such as allergies, sinus infections, as well as coordinate local care. Pottsboro community members call HSC Health to schedule an appointment, complete their pre-visit check-in electronically, then show up at the library for their appointment.



PLACE

Pottsboro, Texas is a small rural town of retirees who settle there for breathtaking Lake Texoma views. Located 90 miles north of Dallas, this town faced many pandemic-related obstacles. Fortunately, Dianne Connery, Pottsboro's librarian, saw an opportunity to serve during this unprecedented time. Ms. Connery provided Wi-Fi for students to continue online learning and a community garden for patrons to grow crops. The library included a "Library of Things", making household items and gait assistive devices available for residents to "Age in Place." As if that were not enough, Ms. Connery partnered with SaferCare Texas and the University of North Texas Health Science Center to renovate a library storage closet into a safe, virtual health room perfect for community telehealth visits.





PREPARATION

The chosen room was previously a storage closet, so we took great care in planning the renovation. The room location was perfect as its entrance/exit was separate from the library entrance, providing a barrier between library patrons and patients. There was no ventilation to this room, therefore we installed a stand-alone **High-Efficiency Air Particulate (HEPA)** filter. Poor ventilation in small spaces (10' by 12') provides fertility for disease spread. Adequate lighting is an assessment imperative. Natural light is preferable, but if unavailable, artificial white light (more lumens=more light) will suffice. Lighting improves patient/clinician rapport, satisfaction, mood, attention, and perception⁵. Please be sure to illuminate your virtual health room for the best patient experience.

ENVIRONMENT

- **Lighting**
 - 3600 Lumens
- **Entry/Exit**
 - The virtual health room (VHR) dedicated entrance/exit
- **Computer Equipment**
 - Desktop computer system
 - Mouse
 - Keyboard

INFECTION PREVENTION

- HEPA Filter
- Disinfectant
- Gloves
- Hand Hygiene

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

- Pulse Oximeter
- Scale
- Thermometer
- Blood Pressure Monitor



PURIFICATION

Our last objective was to provide disinfectant capable of killing most micro-organisms, the disinfectant safety data sheets, and an organized policy on disinfection procedures. This last initiative was carefully structured as Covid-19 disease spread was of great concern.



Definitions:

Disinfection: the action of disinfecting or purifying from infection; destruction of the germs of infectious diseases.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): specialized clothing or equipment, worn by an employee for protection against infectious materials.

Virtual Health Room: a private room within the library designated only for virtual health.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our Policy

To reduce the risk of community spread of Sars-CoV2 and other communicable bacteria and/or viruses, processes for disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, frequent hand hygiene, and use of personal protective equipment (PPE), as appropriate, are outlined.

Infection Prevention



**Appointment
Only**



**Masks
Required**



**Covid-19
Screening**

Day of Appointment



**Patient will
arrive 15
min prior to
complete
online forms**



**Patient will
be notified
via text
message
or phone call**

Facility Cleaning and Disinfection

- **Clean/disinfect all frequently touched surfaces daily and as needed such as, but not limited to:**
 - Door handles
 - Light switches
 - Handrails
- **Water fountains will not be used during virtual health visits**
- **Virtual Health Room and Furniture**
 - Suggest carpet removal and replace with easy wipe down flooring
 - Furniture - chairs with no fabric; easy to wipe down between patients
 - Heating, Ventilation, and A/C (HVAC) system
 - Ensure restroom exhaust fans are functional
- **Computer Sterilization**
 - Cover computer keyboard with press and seal to protect and change or wipe off with disinfectant between patients
 - Clear plastic shield to protect screen; wipe down with disinfectant between patients
 - Wipe down computer monitor with disinfectant; review label for contact time, and dry surface thoroughly
- **Wear appropriate PPE and follow CDC guidelines**



LESSONS LEARNED

COMMUNICATION

Many rural communities lack broadband internet access preventing the promotion of Library services through social media/email pathways. Pro-active messaging through traditional mail services, Churches, and community centers yields a higher probability

of gaining community buy-in. allergies, sinus infections, as well as coordinate local care. Pottsboro community members call HSC Health to schedule an appointment, complete their pre-visit check-in electronically, then show up at the library for their appointment.

QR CODES

Our team converted many educational materials to QR codes, but learned that many Library

patrons were unfamiliar with this technology. In response, we created a "How to Scan a QR code."

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Another pro-active measure is to seek out all local emergency services. Fire, police, and ambulance services are essential resources for any facility welcoming

patients. Additionally, locating local pharmacies and specialty medical clinics connects providers and patients to necessary referral services.

In conclusion, telemedicine, underutilized pre-pandemic, was instrumental in connecting patients to clinicians despite conducting their encounters in different locations. This innovation demonstrates ongoing efforts to improve health care access.

Rural communities lack broadband access, an imperative for telemedicine. Rural libraries equipped with broadband are perfect venues for patients to come for diagnosis, treatment recommendations, and disease management/education.

Remember partnerships, place, preparation and purification; follow these steps and make a positive impact in your communities!



SaferCare Texas

3500 Camp Bowie Boulevard, Fort Worth, Texas 76107

 safercaretexas.org



Pottsboro, Texas

104 N. Main, Pottsboro, Texas 75076

 pottsborolibrary.com

