



Jeff Davis County Virtual Health



SaferCare
Texas



OVERVIEW

Some people in Texas travel more than 100 miles to the nearest hospital, which highlights the poor rural healthcare access challenges. Additionally, many rural Texas communities lack access to the internet, which limits the access of telehealth. 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.

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 to rural libraries is crucial to improving access to health care and health literacy education in these underserved communities.

Libraries in Texas rural areas are frequent community hubs for information, education, and other basic needs. We partnered with Jeff Davis County Library and HSC Health to implement telehealth services through the library virtual connection room and the mobile food pantry van.

THE FOUR P'S

Addressing the four P's below is 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).

JEFF DAVIS LIBRARY

The leadership of the Jeff Davis County Library and Mobile Comunidad program received funding to implement a telehealth room in the library and in the mobile food pantry van as a partial solution to the lack of health care resources currently available to the citizens of Jeff Davis county. Jeanine Bishop, Treasurer of Friends of Jeff Davis

County Library (FJDCL) and founder of Mobile Comunidad and Vicki Gibson, President of FJDCL and co-founder of Mobile Comunidad, reached out to SaferCare Texas to facilitate implementation of the telehealth room/mobile unit and to facilitate a partnership with HSC Health to provide limited telehealth services.

HSC SAFERCARE TEXAS

SaferCare Texas provided subject matter expertise with the virtual health room. The Jeff Davis County leadership used our Pottsboro Telehealth playbook to guide their renovations.

The environment renovation included safety measures for patients and library patrons as well as essential equipment for clinicians to conduct accurate assessments.

HSC HEALTH

HSC Health offered a private virtual appointment system where Jeff Davis community members could directly book appointments with HSC health care providers. These providers offer acute visits for issues such as allergies and sinus infections. They are also able to conduct wellness

screenings and manage chronic conditions, and coordinate local care. Jeff Davis community members call HSC Health to schedule an appointment, complete their pre-visit check-in electronically, then show up at the virtual health room for their appointment.





PLACE

Jeff Davis County, Texas

Jeff Davis County covers 2,258 square miles and has a population of approx. 2,274. The county suffers from a lack of access to healthcare and other disparities such as "food deserts", poverty, and low income. The Jeff Davis County Library is located in Fort Davis and serves as a resource hub for the community, including traditional library resources, a food pantry, community classes, and more. One primary care medical office is listed for the county. It is also located in Fort Davis, and is serviced by one physician and one nurse practitioner. Big Bend Regional Medical Center is considered a small "frontier hospital" and is located 22 miles away in Alpine, Texas. The nearest full-service hospital is in Midland/Odessa or El Paso. Both are more than two hours away.





PREPARATION

These are the ideal components of a telehealth room.

ENVIRONMENT

The right environment can greatly impact the quality of a health visit.

- Entry/Exit
 - Provide a dedicated entrance/exit
- Computer Equipment
 - Desktop computer system
 - Mouse
 - Keyboard
- Lighting
 - Adequate lighting is needed to allow visual assessment. Natural light is best, however, artificial white light will suffice.

INFECTION PREVENTION

Protection from infection is necessary to help reduce the spread of disease.

- HEPA Filter
- Disinfectant
- Gloves
- Hand Hygiene

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Basic medical supplies is needed to gather vital signs that are part of most routine health visits

- Pulse Oximeter
- Scale
- Thermometer
- Blood Pressure Monitor



PURIFICATION

An up-to-date infection control policy should be implemented to reduce the spread of contagions. The policy addresses prevention activities such as disinfection and proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The infection control policy requires routine updates based on the latest CDC guidelines.



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 Covid-19 and other communicable bacteria and/or viruses, processes for disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, frequent hand hygiene, and use of appropriate protective equipment is outlined below:

Infection Prevention



Appointment
Only



Masks
Recommended



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

COMMUNICATIONS

Many rural communities lack 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.

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 internet access, a necessity for telemedicine. Rural libraries equipped with internet are ideal or optimal 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!



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