WHAT IS TELEHEALTH?

- “Telehealth is defined as the use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration”. (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2015).

- “Telehealth is especially critical in rural and other remote areas that lack sufficient health care services, including specialty care”. (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2015).
SUCCESS STORY – MIDWEST TELEHEALTH NETWORK

- CHI Health Good Samaritan established their telehealth network, now called the Midwest Telehealth Network, in 1994 thanks to a grant from the Office of Rural Health Policy. The MTN began providing clinical and educational telehealth services in 1995.

- Since 1994, Good Samaritan has received a total of 14 federal grants to support the expansion of telehealth in Nebraska and north-central Kansas. The total grant funding is nearly $7.5 million.

- Of these grants, three were used to help establish and expand services for the Nebraska Statewide Telehealth Network (NSTN) in 2004.

- As the grant writer for Good Samaritan for the past 16 years, I have been able to assist with securing 11 of the 14 federal grants.

- 6 of these federal grants have been through the USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program.


- Of the nearly $7.5 million secured, almost $2 million has been through the USDA DLT Program (including grant and cash matching).
IMPACT OF USDA DLT FUNDING

- With each USDA DLT grant award, the Midwest Telehealth Network (MTN) was able to expand to include new end point sites and services.
- MTN was able to grow from 11 sites in 2004 to 33 sites with the 2014 grant.
- Clinical services available over the MTN include: Mental Health, Abuse, Cardiology, Diabetic Education, Endocrinology, Gastric Surgery, Genetics, Geriatrics, Infectious Disease, Neurology, Nutrition, Oncology, Orthopedic, Psychiatry, Speech, Wound Care, Teletrauma, Emergency Room coverage and our proposed Rapid Response Team services.
- In addition to clinical services, the MTN also provides access to education and administrative meetings.

USAC RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

- “The Rural Health Care (RHC) Program supports health care facilities in bringing world class medical care to rural areas through increased connectivity. It provides up to $400 million annually in reduced rates for broadband and telecom services. There are two subprograms in the RHC Program: the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program and the Telecommunications (Telecom) Program” (Universal Service Administrative Company, 2017).
- The program was established in 1996 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).
- The RHC Program has two funding programs: Telecommunications Program and the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF).
USAC RURAL HEALTHCARE PROGRAM

• Program 1: Telecommunications Program

• Telecommunications Program – this is the original funding program. This program provides funding based on an urban rate for the largest city in each state. This means that you will receive a discount on your cost of service based on the difference of the urban to rural rate. For example, if you have a circuit costing $1,000 in Benkelman and the Nebraska urban rate for the same circuit in Omaha is $181.82, then your would receive $818.18 per month in USAC RHC funding. This means your final monthly out of pocket cost is $181.82 – the same if you were in Omaha.

USAC RURAL HEALTHCARE PROGRAM

• Program 2: Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF)

• The Healthcare Connect Fund is a newer program with funding starting in the 2013 USAC funding year. This program provides a flat 65% funding for the cost of your circuit. So if your circuit costs $1,000/month, this will provide 65% funding so you will receive $650/month. This program will fund internet whereas the Telecommunications Program does not.

• The HCF Program will fund both individuals and consortia projects. Consortia projects may include eligible urban locations.
ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

- Eligible sites for the Rural Healthcare Programs include:
  - Not-for-profit and public of one of the following entity types:
    - Post secondary educational institutions offering healthcare instruction, teaching hospitals, or medical schools;
    - Community health centers or health centers providing healthcare to migrants;
    - Local health departments or agencies;
    - Community mental health centers;
    - Not-for-profit hospitals,
    - Rural health clinics including mobile clinics;
    - Dedicated emergency rooms of for-profit hospitals;
    - NEW – Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF).

(USAC) – RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

- Has worked with the USAC Rural Health Care Program for over 16 years.
- Files for USAC RHC support for a majority of the members of the Nebraska Statewide Telehealth Network (NSTN).
- Just this past USAC funding year, FY 2015 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016), submitted over 300 funding requests on behalf of nearly 125 Health Care Providers (HCPs) and secured a total of nearly $1.8 million for Nebraska hospitals, rural health clinics and public health departments.
FUNDING FOR TELEHEALTH LINKS


• USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program: [https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants](https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants)

• USAC Rural Health Care Program: [http://www.usac.org/rhc/](http://www.usac.org/rhc/)

QUESTIONS?

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