# South Carolina Department of Mental Health Telepsychiatry Programs

## Driving the Future of Psychiatric Service Delivery

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# Telehealth and Telemedicine

- The terms "telehealth" and "telemedicine" are often used interchangeably, but that is not exactly accurate.
- "Telehealth" is a broader range of services such as video conferencing, remote monitoring, online medical evaluations, and transmission of still images.[1]
  - Telehealth is the interaction of patient and clinician via electronic communications to improve a patient's clinical status.[1]
  - Telehealth includes a growing variety of applications and services using two-way video, email, smartphones, wireless tools and other forms of telecommunication.[1]
- "Telemedicine" refers specifically to the subset of telehealth represented by the delivery of clinical services via synchronous, interactive audio and video telecommunications systems.[1]
- Several key features of "Telepsychiatry" are:
  - High definition
  - HIPAA compliant
  - Encrypted
  - Real-time

Source: [1]Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

# *2025*

- In 2015, every state in the United States was experiencing at least a high shortage of practicing child and adolescent psychiatrists.[1]

  - In South Carolina, 4 counties had a high shortage, 12 counties had a severe shortage, and 29 counties had no child and adolescent psychiatrists at all. Only one county had a mostly moderate supply of child and adolescent psychiatrists.[1]

- The pool of psychiatrists working with public sector and insured populations declined by 10 percent from 2003-2013.[2]

  - 77% percent of counties in the United States are underserved.[2]

  - Due to efficient screening for mental health and suds in primary care, there will be growing demand for access to psychiatric services.[2]

- In 2025, it is projected that the supply of full-time equivalent psychiatrists will equal 45,210. In 2025, it is projected that the demand for full-time equivalent psychiatrists will range from 51,290 to 60,610.[3]

  - In 2025, the shortage of full-time equivalent psychiatrists in the United States could exceed 15,000.[3]

Sources: [1]American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
[2]National Council for Behavioral Health
[3]Health Resources and Services Administration

# *2030*

- By 2030, there will be a **shortage** of **121,300** physicians in the United States.
  - 66,000 in the South.

- Currently, there is a **need** for **13,800** primary care providers and **5,500** psychiatrists in the United States just to meet the current demand.

- By 2030, demand for healthcare will increase **15%**.

- While supply continues to lag behind demand, methods to address the shortfall will become more imperative.

# One Such Solution

- The solutions depend on a combination of interrelated activities. One such solution: improved efficiency of service delivery.[1]

- There are two distinct conclusions that can be drawn from the information.[2]
  - The introduction of telepsychiatry as a method of service delivery for psychiatric services at the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH) provides both a recruitment incentive to psychiatrists and a resource deployment tool for operations.[2]
  - Recruitment Incentive…[2]
    - Geographic area
    - Opportunity to mix practice environments
    - Flexible schedule
  - Resource Deployment Tool…[2]
    - System-wide utilization and scheduling
    - Load balancing of need
    - Rapid relocation of services

Deaf Resident Strikes the Right Note with Telemedicine
(https://www.scetv.org/stories/telehealth?page=2)

# Community Telepsychiatry Program

- The Community Telepsychiatry Program started because of the need for full spectrum community mental health services in rural areas across the state.

- Built on the success of the SCDMH Emergency Department Telepsychiatry Program, SCDMH has equipped its community mental health centers and mental health clinics to provide psychiatric treatment services to its patients via telepsychiatry.

- Many SCDMH community mental health centers operate mental health clinics in rural counties that are distant from the main center. The use of telepsychiatry within catchment networks allows psychiatrists based at the main center to serve outlying satellite clinics without having to travel to those locations. This technology provides patients in need of mental healthcare both scheduled and urgent access to psychiatric services.

- SCDMH has also recruited agency psychiatrists to supplement catchment areas experiencing a shortage of available psychiatric time by utilizing telepsychiatry. These psychiatrists are located in a central geographic location and provide telepsychiatry services from that central location to locations across the state.

- Recruiting psychiatrists is challenging in many locations, especially rural areas. Driving to remote rural clinics consumes valuable time better spent serving patients.

# The Two Largest Telepsychiatry Programs

Along with the Emergency Department Telepsychiatry Program, the Community Telepsychiatry Program comprises the largest contributor to the number of psychiatric services rendered via telehealth.
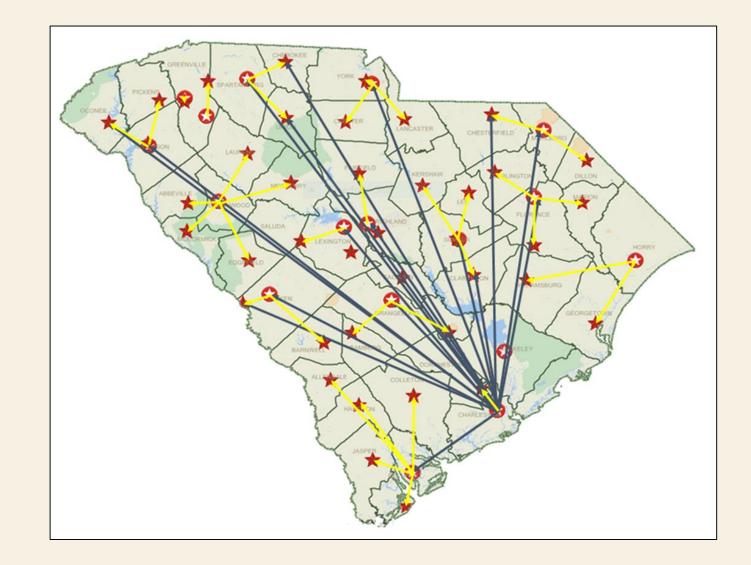
## Community Telepsychiatry

- More than 52,000 psychiatric treatment services provided since inception

- Approximately 1,600 psychiatric treatment services provided per month

- 42 telepsychiatrists in full and part-time capacities

- 17 participating community mental health centers

# Community Telepsychiatry Program

- Primary Goals
  - Improve access and timeliness of clinical services
  - Improve clinical workflows and efficiencies
  - Provide collaborative care
  - Increase patient engagement
- Clinical Services
  - Evaluations are provided by licensed and board certified psychiatrists
    - Initial Psychiatric Medical Assessment (PMA)
    - Follow-up care
    - Treatment team participation
  - Patient-personal treatment and comprehensive discharge care plan is developed and monitored
  - Electronic medical record (EMR) is utilized
    - System-wide EMR application increases service delivery effectiveness via timely, accessible clinical information
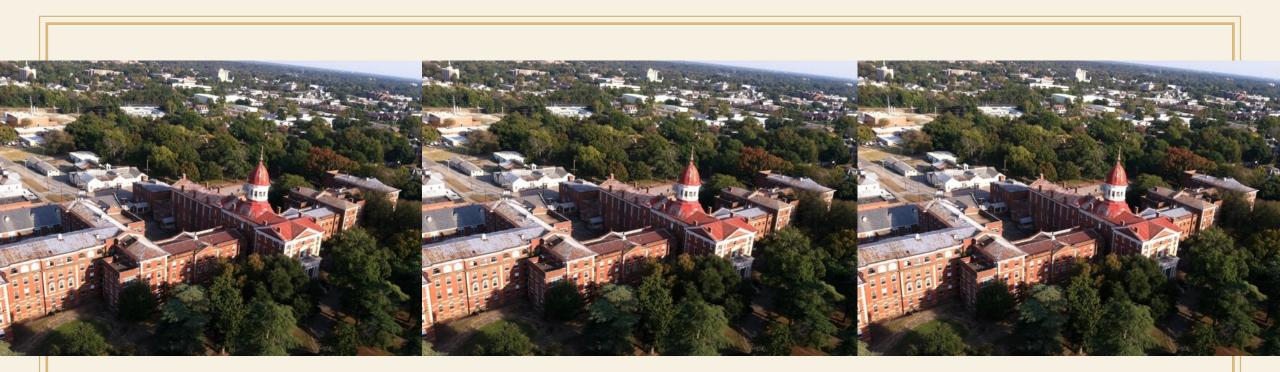  - Effects continuity of care

# State-wide Interconnectivity

The interconnectivity of SCDMH's Telepsychiatry Programs creates state-wide access to care and efficiently deploys limited clinical resources.

# Increased Seat Time

# *Telepsychiatry*

Part of SCDMH's more than 800 portals of access to services

- SCDMH Vision: As the State's Mental Health Authority, SCDMH will be the provider and employer of choice.
- SCDMH Mission: To support the recovery of people with mental illnesses.
  - Telepsychiatry is the future of SCDMH's mission.

# Additional Resources

https://www.scetv.org/
http://www.sctelehealth.org/
https://scdmh.net/telepsychiatry/

# Thank You!

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