MEDTAPP Telehealth To Improve Equity (TIE) Project
Request for Information Announcement

The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM), in partnership with the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center (GRC), will be sponsoring a Telehealth Project with Ohio’s seven colleges of medicine and other public colleges and universities who train and license reimbursable providers, as defined in the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 5160-1-18.

Access to health care reduces disparities and promotes health equity. People are unable to access health care for a number of reasons and in order to “develop policies and programs that reduce disparities in health care access, we need a comprehensive understanding of the multiple factors that underlie them.”1 According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, telehealth “holds promise as a means of increasing access to care and improving health outcomes.”2 Telehealth can reach communities and individuals with limited access to health care, reduce time waiting for appointments, and offer more convenient patient-centered care.3 Telehealth services are quickly becoming an important part of the health care system, but enhanced research is needed to better guide the implementation and delivery of telehealth care.4

The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) implemented OAC chapter 5160-1-18 allowing telehealth services, defined as “the direct delivery of health care services to a patient via secure, synchronous, interactive, real-time electronic communication comprised of both audio and video elements.” The rule, revised in 2019, allows for the provision of healthcare services to patients enrolled in Ohio Medicaid by certain types of providers, including physicians, psychologists, physician assistants, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse-midwives, certified nurse practitioners, licensed independent social workers, licensed independent chemical dependency counselors, licensed independent marriage and family therapists, and licensed professional clinical counselors. Since implementing the telehealth rule, the Ohio Department of Medicaid has seen an increase in telehealth services—primarily in behavioral health services—but efforts to further expand utilization are needed.5

The ODM is interested in identifying best practices and resources needed to improve health equity through increasing access to telehealth services for people insured by Ohio Medicaid.

This project seeks to fund projects in areas including but not limited to:

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2 (Office of Health Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation., 2016)
5 Ohio Department of Medicaid. Internal ODM analyses using Medicaid administrative data.
• Member utilization of telehealth services
  o Social determinants of health and health equity
  o Effective telehealth service delivery to people insured by Ohio Medicaid
  o Active engagement of people insured by Ohio Medicaid
  o Continuity of care for people insured by Ohio Medicaid

• Medicaid populations/topics of interest
  o Rural/geographically isolated communities
  o Individuals with disabilities
  o Adolescents
  o LGBTQ+ population
  o Acute care
  o Behavioral health
  o Chronic conditions
  o Primary care services
  o Sub-specialty services (e.g. dermatology)

• Provider utilization of Medicaid telehealth services
  o Innovative technologies
  o Implementation of telehealth as part of a fully functioning Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH)

This project will not fund delivery of healthcare services.

Prior to publication of a Request for Application (RFA), a Request for Information (RFI) session will be held as an opportunity to gain valuable input from experts across the state about how to best improve health equity through the delivery of telehealth services for people insured by Ohio Medicaid.

Key MEDTAPP Telehealth RFI Details

• Participate or Present at the RFI Session - On behalf of ODM, GRC will host a WebEx-based RFI session open to Ohio’s seven colleges of medicine and other public colleges and universities who train and license reimbursable providers as defined in the OAC 5160-1-18. Researchers who have expertise in telehealth delivery and health equity are invited to present. Registration is required to participate or present at the RFI session. Only one presentation per institution is permitted. A limited number of presentation slots will be available. Times will be assigned starting at 1:15 pm based on the order of registration for the event.
  o Where: WebEx link to be provided at a later date
  o When: March 13, 2020, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

• RFI Submission Deadline – All institutions interested in presenting at the RFI session must submit a letter via email to Kaylene Way Hedgepeth, project manager, at Kaylene.way@osumc.edu, by February 24, 2020. Include the following information:
Description of institution including university affiliation, department(s), and external partnerships and university collaborations;

List of participants from your institutions with their email addresses and phone numbers;

Contact information of the primary contact; and

A brief description of your institution’s subject matter expertise in telehealth and/or health equity.

- **Presentation Guidelines** - Presentation materials must be in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. All materials to be shared at the RFI session must be submitted via email to Kaylene Way Hedgepeth, project manager, at Kaylene.way@osumc.edu, by March 9, 2020. **Materials submitted after the deadline will not be considered.** Presentation length will be contingent upon the number of presenters.

Presentations should focus on emerging and innovative solutions for improving access to, and utilization of, telehealth services, primarily as they relate to the research areas described above (health equity, member utilization, and provider utilization).

**Request for Applications (RFA) Timeline**

The RFA is expected to be released in mid-April. Applicants must be affiliated with an Ohio college of medicine or offer programs that train or license reimbursable providers as defined in OAC 5160-1-18. Additional information regarding the RFA requirements will be posted on the current funding page of the GRC website.⁶

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⁶ GRC manages the Medicaid Technical Assistance and Policy Program (MEDTAPP) for ODM, under which the Telehealth RFI is sponsored. MEDTAPP is a Medicaid and university research partnership aimed at supporting the efficient and effective administration of the Medicaid program. The Telehealth to Improve Equity project is funded by the Ohio Department of Medicaid and administered by the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center. The views expressed in this document are solely those of the authors and do not represent the views of the state of Ohio or federal Medicaid programs.