



2018 Annual Report

Connecting rural and underserved
South Carolinians to quality health care services through broadband,
technology, and telehealth.



Leadership

Who We Are and What We Do

Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2010 and provides telehealth support services to health care providers in rural and underserved areas in South Carolina.

Vision

Improving the health of South Carolina through telemedicine.

Mission

Facilitate health care access across South Carolina through the utilization of innovative technology to promote the provision of qualified medical professionals of various disciplines.

From the Executive's Desk

Fellow South Carolinians,

What an amazing year 2018 turned out to be for telehealth! The continued growth across South Carolina and across the entire nation has been unbelievable. Throughout 2018, we witnessed shifts in state and federal policies, consumer giants like Apple and Samsung pioneered new ways to change the world with telehealth while Congress passed the CHRONIC Care Act, which opens the door for elderly Americans to benefit from telehealth in their home (FINALLY). Tele-MAT was successfully implemented in several behavioral health sites across South Carolina making it easier for Opioid addicts to receive much needed services. We watched several federally qualified health centers in South Carolina step up to the plate and provide telehealth services in the schools and behavioral health facilities. The term broadband hit center stage as health care providers and state leaders identified the need for high-quality broadband access to facilitate telehealth expansion.

In South Carolina, school based telehealth is now available in eighteen schools, direct to consumer virtual care is offered by all of our health systems, tele-psychiatry and tele-mental services have been expanded into our rural communities by the SC Department of Mental Health, and we now have more than 400 broadband circuits for health care providers being funded through the FCC's Health Connect Fund program.

Palmetto Care Connections is proud of our partnership with SCTA as we work diligently to ensure that rural South Carolinians also have access to quality health care services. Collaboration is the key to expanding telehealth in our great state and we here in South Carolina do that very well. We look forward to what 2019 holds for both telehealth and broadband growth and we ask you to look back with us as we take a look at the 2018 accomplishments in this Annual Report.



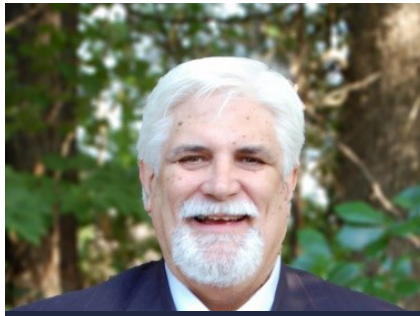
Kathy Schwarting, MHA
Chief Executive Officer
Palmetto Care Connections

Special thanks to South Carolina ETV for the rural photos (including the cover).

2018 Board of Directors



Graham Adams, PhD
*Chief Executive Officer
SC Office of Rural Health*



Rick Foster, MD
*Executive Director, Catalyst for Health
SC Hospital Association*



Will Harms, MD
*Vice President Medical Affairs
Blue Cross & Blue Shield of SC*



Danette McAlhaney, MD
*Owner/Family Practitioner
Bamberg Family Practice*



James, McElligott, MD
*Medical Director, Center for Telehealth
Medical University of South Carolina*



Meera Narasimhan, MD, DFAPA
*Associate Provost Health Sciences
University of South Carolina*



Rich Rogers
*Vice President of Information Services
Chief Information Officer
Prisma Health*



Mark Williams, MD
*Chief Clinical Officer
Prisma Health*

“

Palmetto Care Connections provides yeoman's service in the state of SC to improve access to care for the underserved rural communities via innovative technologies, educational opportunities and outreach. They lead by example by being collaborative, bringing together stakeholders from the community working on solutions that best serve the citizens of our great state.

-Meera Narasimhan, MD, DFAPA

”

Statewide Initiatives

South Carolina Telehealth Alliance Co-Chair

1

Deploy a coordinated, open-access telehealth network in South Carolina.

2

Understand and effectively respond to the health needs of SC citizens with an emphasis on those living in underserved and rural areas.

3

Build and scale telehealth clinical services and programs that expand access to care.

4

Broaden mental health and related telehealth clinical services and programs to increase access to quality care.

5

Conduct statewide education, training, and promotion to providers and the public to accelerate and spread adoption of telehealth.

6

Develop a telehealth organization structure that encourages and facilitates statewide collaboration among providers in the delivery of health care, education, and research.

7

Establish the value case for telehealth through robust assessment and rigorous analysis of telehealth outcomes.

8

Demonstrate to legislators, payers, providers, and the public the impact of telehealth on improving access, quality, and affordability.

As Co-Chair of the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA), PCC leads the implementation on numerous initiatives in the SCTA Statewide Telehealth Strategic Plan. See strategies listed to the left.

SOUTH CAROLINA Telehealth ALLIANCE

Highlights of PCC's Collaboration with SCTA

Co-Chairs Education Committee with SC Area Health Education Consortium.

Leads Statewide Centralized Credentialing Pilot Program.

Assists with connecting providers for better Tele-MAT access

Hosts Annual Telehealth Summit and Regional Telehealth Meetings.

Partners with SC Department of Mental Health to expand mental health services in rural South Carolina.

“

PCC plays an essential role in helping lead the SC Telehealth Alliance's efforts to expand telehealth across the state. Their technical expertise with broadband has allowed countless health care organizations obtain the access and connectivity necessary for telehealth at a subsidized, affordable cost. What's more, the staff at PCC have deep relationships with leaders and health care providers throughout South Carolina's most rural communities, often the areas that could most benefit from telehealth. PCC helps keep the needs of these rural communities at the fore of SC Telehealth Alliance planning and decision making. Whether it is hosting the Summit or helping lead the SCTA Education and IT Workgroups or co-chairing the SCTA Advisory Council, PCC is there as one the lead partners of the SC Telehealth Alliance, helping us meet our mission to improve the health of all South Carolinians through telehealth.

-Ryan Kruis, LMSW, SC Telehealth Alliance

”



SOUTH CAROLINA TELEHEALTH ALLIANCE

TELEHEALTH SERVICES

527

connected endpoints

348K+

Telehealth patient interactions in 2018

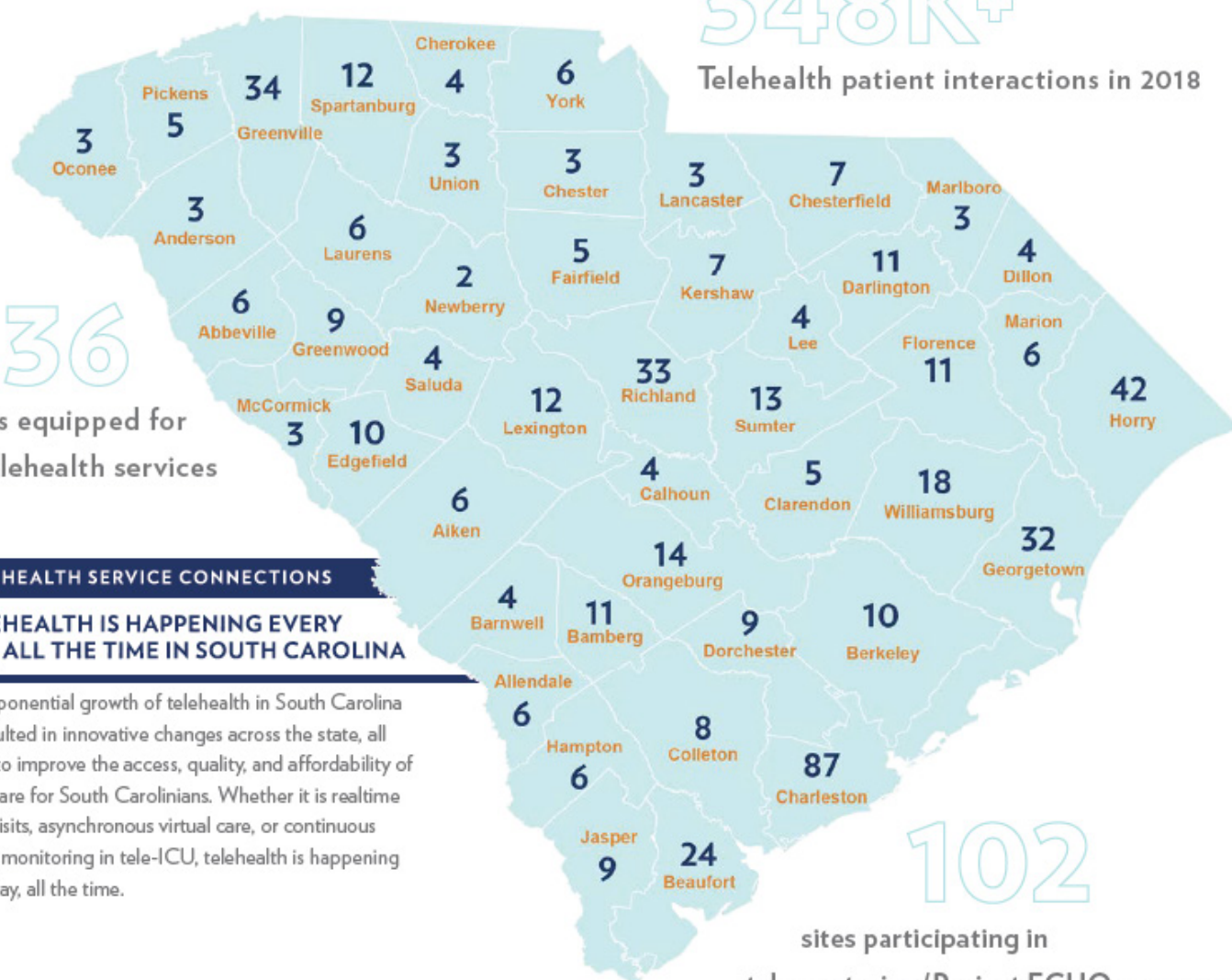
436

sites equipped for
telehealth services

TELEHEALTH SERVICE CONNECTIONS

TELEHEALTH IS HAPPENING EVERY DAY, ALL THE TIME IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The exponential growth of telehealth in South Carolina has resulted in innovative changes across the state, all aimed to improve the access, quality, and affordability of healthcare for South Carolinians. Whether it is realtime video visits, asynchronous virtual care, or continuous patient monitoring in tele-ICU, telehealth is happening every day, all the time.



102

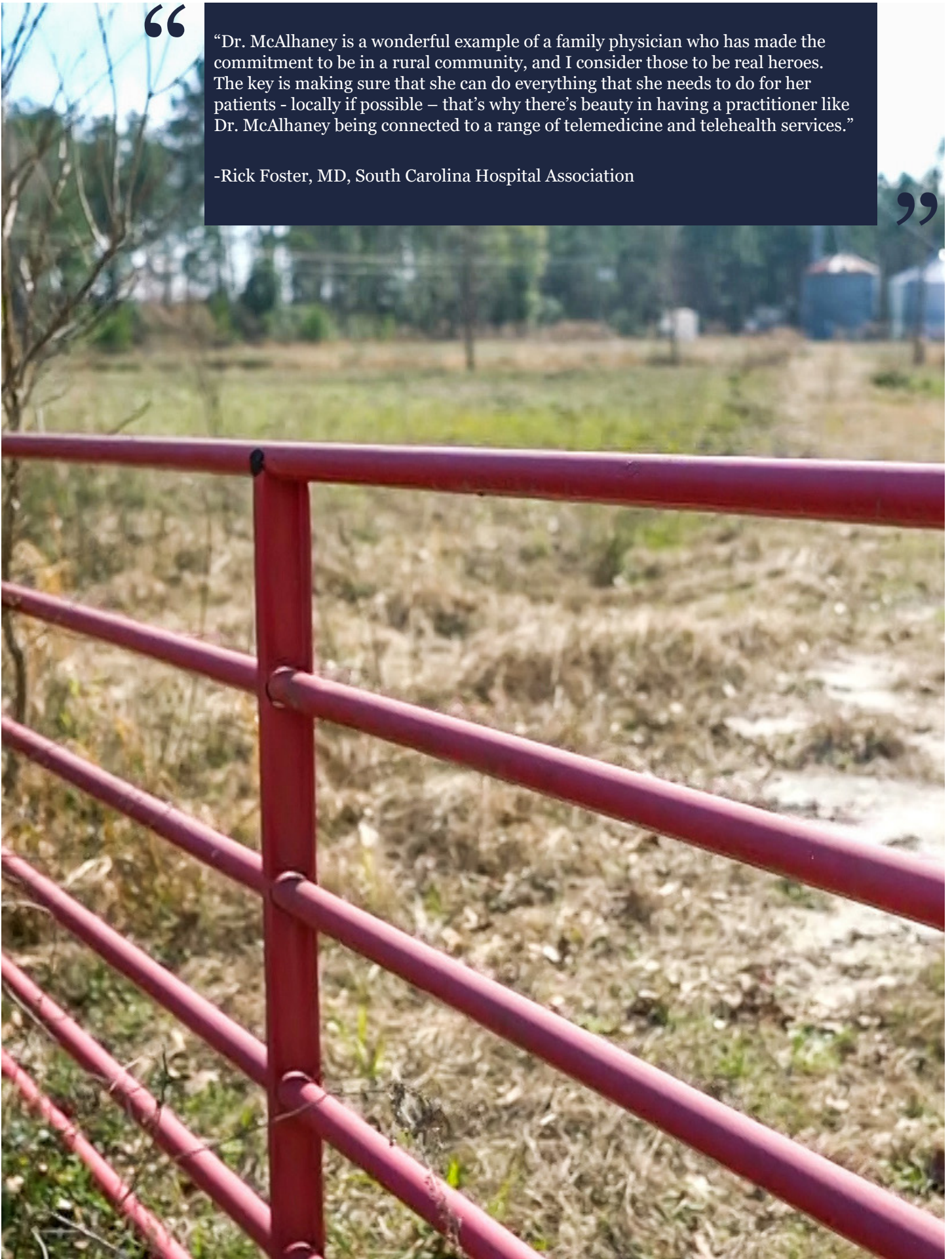
sites participating in
telementoring/Project ECHO program

“

“Dr. McAlhaney is a wonderful example of a family physician who has made the commitment to be in a rural community, and I consider those to be real heroes. The key is making sure that she can do everything that she needs to do for her patients - locally if possible – that’s why there’s beauty in having a practitioner like Dr. McAlhaney being connected to a range of telemedicine and telehealth services.”

-Rick Foster, MD, South Carolina Hospital Association

”



Broadband

Broadband Consortium Leader

Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) is the Consortium Leader of Palmetto State Providers Network (PSPN). PCC can assist nonprofit hospitals, rural health clinics, skilled nursing facilities, community health centers, local health departments, and more in getting connected with up to 65% savings!

PCC has grown
Palmetto State Providers
Network (PSPN) from 95
funded circuits to more than
400 funded circuits!

Why Broadband

- Access to Medical Specialists by Rural Health Providers Using Telehealth
- Enhanced Exchange of Electronic Health Records
- Improved Quality and Lower Costs of Health Care
- Distance Learning (Remote Training) of Medical Personnel

In 2018, PCC applied for
\$20 million in federal
subsidies that will result in
savings of more than
\$13 million over 3 years for health
care providers in SC!

Our Impact in 2018

273

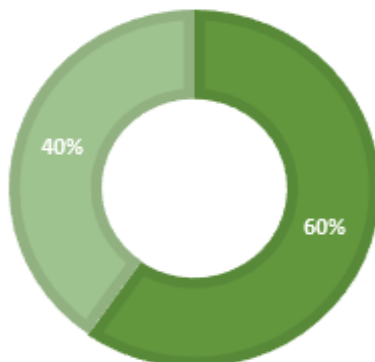
Health Care Sites
Receive Funding

400+

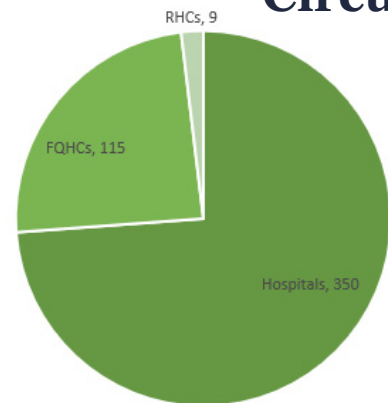
PSPN Circuits

Urban or Rural

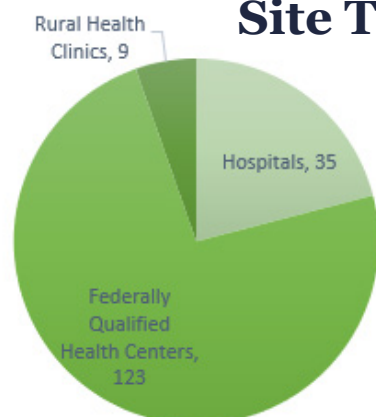
■ Rural Sites ■ Urban Sites



Circuits



Site Type



Established partnerships with state agencies to include broadband.

Technology

Managed Services



PCC's Managed Services Protect from:

- Ransomware
- Network Viruses
- Spyware
- Data Theft
- Phishing Attacks
- Email Spam and Malware
- Security Threats
- Weak Passwords
- Employee Breaches
- Unpatched Devices

Technology Maintenance & Support



125+

Equipment
Trainings

75

New Carts
Deployed

125

Managed End Points

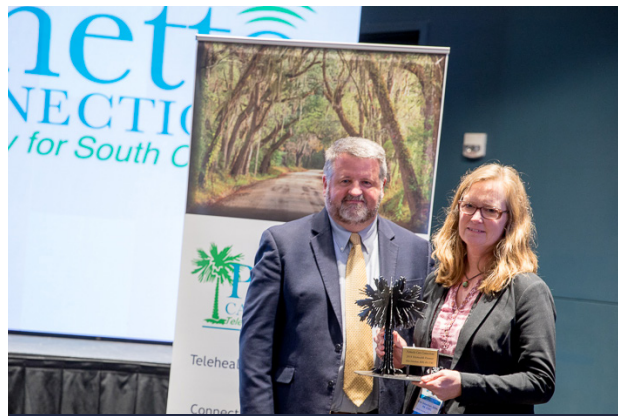
Education

6th Annual Telehealth Summit of SC

Palmetto Care Connections hosted its **6th Annual Telehealth Summit** on April 10-12, 2018, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center in Columbia, SC. Below are the 2018 telehealth award winners pictured with Graham Adams, PCC Board Chairman.



2018 Telehealth Champion: Congressman Tom Rice
Pictured (left to right): Brooke Yeager and Tom Keegan
(accepting on Congressman Rice's behalf)



2018 Telehealth Pioneer
Ellen Debenham, BSHA, RN, CCRC
Presented by Graham Adams, PhD, PCC Board Chairman



2018 Telehealth Program of Excellence
MUSC Teleneurology Program
Presented by Graham Adams, PhD, PCC Board Chairman



2018 Telehealth Innovator
Melissa Camp
Presented by Graham Adams, PhD, PCC Board Chairman

“

In my position I read a lot of exhibitor and sponsorship brochures. The PCC Annual Telehealth Summit brochure is by far one of the best laid out and most informative I've come across. I very much appreciate the work that has gone into clearly communicating a great deal of information.

-Jacqueline Grunau, Carolina eHealth Network

”

Education

2018 Summit Sponsors



Education

Educational Initiatives

In collaboration with the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance and South Carolina AHEC, Palmetto Care Connections hosts monthly webinars, regional symposiums, and celebrates Telehealth Awareness Week to provide telehealth education in South Carolina.

289

Webinar
Participants

100

Regional Meeting
Attendees

907

E-Newsletter
Subscribers

701

Social Media
Followers

249

Summit Attendees

28

Summit Sponsors

43

Summit Speakers

80+

Organizations at
the Summit

2018 Telehealth Regional Symposium
Greenville, SC



Education & Advocacy

Bamberg County Telehealth Awareness Week



Pictured (Left to Right): Trent Kinard, Bamberg County Council, Kathy Schwarting, Palmetto Care Connections, and Dr. Rick Foster, SC Hospital Association.

In 2018, Bamberg County Council proclaimed October 15-19, 2018, as Bamberg County Telehealth Awareness Week.



Pictured: Dr. Danette McAlhaney (on screen), Bamberg Family Practice, and Blake Williams, RN, Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School Nurse.

Palmetto Care Connections partnered with Bamberg Family Practice and Bamberg School District One to provide a school-based telehealth demonstration to the community during Telehealth Awareness Week.

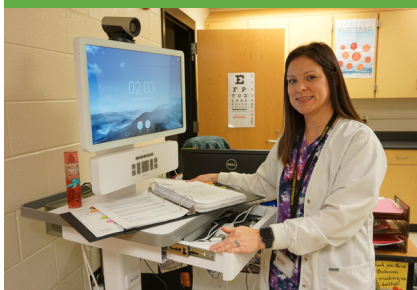
Program Development

School-Based Telehealth



PCC Telehealth Clinical Coordinator Stacey Catoe, RN provided training and support at 16 schools in Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, and Calhoun counties in 2018. PCC also assisted Little River, SC with connecting clinics to providers and deploying telehealth carts in four Horry County schools.

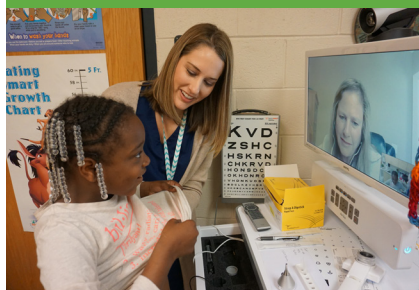
Decreased Transportation



"We received equipment and training during 2018 . Many of our parents have challenges with transportation, so treating the student at school can help ensure access to care."
-Chasity Boleman, RN, Allendale Elementary School

Allendale County

Decreased Absenteeism



School Nurse Lindsay Austin, RN assists MUSC'S Paula Brooks, APRN, (on screen) with a telehealth consult for a student who came to school with a sore throat and low-grade fever.

Barnwell County

Timely Care



Savannah Brown, RN, at Bamberg Ehrhardt High School(Bamberg County) connects to Bamberg primary care physician Danette McAlhaney, MD (on screen) to complete an ear exam using the telehealth cart.

Bamberg County

“Bamberg County is a small, economically depressed community and our local schools are one of the biggest assets that we have. Our parents in Bamberg are like parents anywhere...they want the best for their kids. Unfortunately, many of our families have no health insurance, no means of transportation and no extra money for meals if they did have the means to travel to other areas for health care. Telehealth in our schools has allowed our students to be seen in the school by a local physician, Dr. McAlhaney. The technology is utterly amazing to me...you can use the equipment to hear the heartbeat, look down the throat or in the ears of the student. We basically have everything in the schools that is needed to provide health care to our kids except for the physician herself! Our parents have been very receptive to the change and in many cases Dr. McAlhaney is the child's primary care physician. We have all made the choice to live in this community as this is our home. You need to make the place where you live as good as it can be, and telehealth helps us to do just that.

-Phyllis Schwarting, Bamberg School District One Superintendent

”

“

One of the reasons I came back to this area after medical school was that my husband wanted to return to farming, which is his first love. When I came to Bamberg over 20 years ago, the Bamberg County Hospital was financially viable, and in fact it was a bustling hospital. Over the years the number of inpatients declined, and what we found was that technologies in medicine had expanded so much and so quickly that it was difficult for small hospitals to keep up. Our community hospital closed in 2012, leaving a void in specialized care. Our practice was one of the first to do a telemedicine visit with MUSC physicians in tele-psych. It's hard to find psychiatrists in the area to refer patients to. So by having the ability to use MUSC and the tele-psych program, we've been able to provide that service to our patients locally.

-Danette McAlhaney, MD, Family Practitioner at Bamberg Family Practice

”



Program Development

\$75,000 Grant Award



PCC and its partner S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control, Division of Healthy Aging, received a \$75,000, five-year grant from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Diabetes and Heart Disease Management in September 2018. The grant helps fund new telehealth and telemedicine applications to connect members and healthcare systems, and health information technology for monitoring patient outcomes. The program will allow providers to review results and make necessary changes in a timely manner to keep patient on track for quality care.

Carolina Ear, Nose, & Throat Clinic



PCC assisted Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic, P.A. specialist, John F. Ansley, MD with connecting his practice to multiple primary care practices for telehealth consults. PCC assisted with procuring and connecting equipment, implementing telehealth policies and procedures, workflow and staff training.

Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center



Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center (ECCHC) serves the primary health care needs in the Eau Claire community, Columbia, South Carolina's largest underserved collection of low-income neighborhoods. In 2018, PCC assisted ECCHC with identifying, purchasing, and installing telehealth equipment and training staff to connect eight practices in the Midlands, Pee Dee and the Low Country regions so that providers could collaborate on primary care, HIV/AIDS and behavioral health patients.

Little River Medical Center



Over the course of 2018, Palmetto Care Connections partnered with Little River Medical Center (LRMC) to procure the correct hardware and make plans for the deployment of 18 Telehealth carts in and around the Little River and Myrtle Beach areas. LRMC is using the carts for Telehealth between clinics to help with provider shortages and decrease travel time. Additionally, they deployed into several surrounding schools, and are providing primary care and mental health in those schools.



“ PCC has been an invaluable partner in our Telehealth implementation. PCC was there with advice pre and post purchase, aided in installation, along with training of staff on how to use and troubleshoot minor issues. Additionally, the cost savings through the PSPN broadband consortium lead by PCC has been a great savings that has allowed for investment in other areas, ultimately leading to better care for our patients.

”

—Steven Nunez, Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center

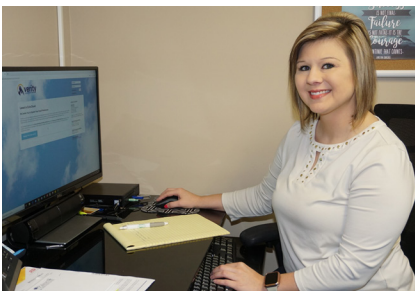
Advocacy & Collaboration

Conference and Meeting Presentations



Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) was invited to share information about telehealth and its impact on health care access at multiple conferences and meetings, including the Legislative Opioid Study Prevention Committee Meeting in 2018. PCC has presented other topics such as “Telehealth in South Carolina,” “Marketing Your Telehealth Program,” “Telehealth and Broadband,” and more.

Centralized Credentialing Initiative



Led by Palmetto Care Connections (PCC), work on the centralized credentialing pilot continued throughout 2018. The goal of this pilot is to test a model for streamlined credentialing for spoke hospitals using a common database and a Credentialing By Proxy process. The database was finalized and shared with the pilot team in August, and all of SC Department of Mental Health’s telepsychiatry providers were manually added to the database. Beaufort Memorial Hospital agreed to be the first spoke hospital to pilot the use of the database, and MUSC is preparing to pilot the database with its telestroke providers in CY19. As this pilot progresses and PCC receives feedback from spoke hospitals, the workgroup will assess the overall feasibility and sustainability of this model.

New Partnerships

New partnerships have been established with the Center for Telehealth and eHealth Law (CTeL), Ohio Valley Physicians, South Carolina Behavioral Health Services Administration, South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health, and the School, Health Care, Library and Broadband Coalition (SHLB).



Advocacy & Collaboration

Project Collaborations



PCC teams with South Carolina AHEC and regional AHECs to increase telehealth education in South Carolina. PCC and South Carolina AHEC co-chair the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance's Education Committee. PCC also serves on the Board of Directors for Lowcountry AHEC.



South Carolina ETV Multimedia Specialists John Lewis and Julia Shillinglaw filmed Bamberg Primary Care providers Courtney Hutto, RN, and Danette McAlhaney, MD as part of their ongoing production of feature videos about telehealth in rural areas.

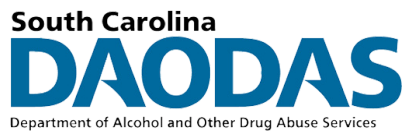


Palmetto Care Connections and South Carolina AHEC partnered with the South Carolina Primary Health Care Association (SCPHCA) to survey all of the Federally Qualified Health Centers in South Carolina to identify their telehealth needs.



PCC has partnered with the South Carolina Hospital Association to expand broadband connectivity into all eligible hospitals in South Carolina.

Our Partners





Established in 2010, Palmetto Care Connections is a non-profit organization that provides technology, broadband, and telehealth support services to health care providers in rural and underserved areas in South Carolina. PCC leads South Carolina's broadband consortium which facilitates broadband connections throughout the state.

