annualreport

Digitally Focused. Equity Driven.







table of contents

vision

To increase access to quality health care for rural and underserved South Carolinians through technology, broadband and telehealth.

mission

To assist providers in keeping health care local and connecting rural and underserved South Carolinians to quality services through technology, broadband and telehealth.

focusareas

Tachnology

Supporting the effective and efficient use of innovations in technology.

Broadband

Improving coverage, affordability and quality of broadband service.

Telehealth

Advancing the adoption of telehealth for increasing access to quality care.



Rick Foster, MD Chair Physician Advisor SC Department of Health and Human Services Help Me Grow SC

board () f directors letter from board chair

As the Chair of the Board of Directors for Palmetto Care Connections (PCC), I am pleased and honored to share the 2022 Annual Report. I am proud to have supported and witnessed PCC's dedication to increase access to care through telehealth, technology, and broadband at the forefront of the covid-19 pandemic. PCC has promoted and provided telehealth support services to health care providers serving rural and underserved communities for twelve years.

In its vision to increase access to care through telehealth utilization, PCC soon recognized the significant role of broadband with the utilization of telehealth. In 2015, PCC became the Broadband Consortium Leader for South Carolina assisting hospitals, federally qualified health centers, skilled nursing facilities, rural health clinics, behavioral health clinics and other eligible

healthcare provide in saving millions of dollars on broadband expenses. PCC diligently worked to help healthcare providers become "telehealth ready" to connect with their patients. During the covid-19 pandemic, it was discovered that while most healthcare providers were "telehealth ready", their patients were not. PCC expanded its services to the patient community by connecting the unconnected with the launch of its digital inclusion program and creating telehealth access points in settings such as churches, senior centers, and affordable housing developments.

PCC continues to demonstrate its devotion to increase access to healthcare in rural and underserved areas through telehealth, technology, and broadband by convening with its partners and developing new relationships with community-based organizations to catalyze health equity in South Carolina. This Annual Report will reflect PCC's commitment to health equity and its trailblazer mindset to take innovative approaches to connect the provider to the patient and the patient to the provider.



Nate Henderson, MD Chief Medical Officer BlueCross and BlueShield of South Carolina



Ann Lewis, MHA
Chief Executive Officer
CareSouth Carolina, Inc.



John H. Magill
Retired State Director
South Carolina
Department of Mental Health



Danette McAlhaney, MD Vice Chair Family Practitioner, Owner Bamberg Family Practice



Executive Medical Director
Center for Telehealth
Medical University of South Carolina
Co-Chair, South Carolina
Telehealth Alliance



Meera Narasimhan, MD, DFAPA Treasurer
Professor and Chair,
Department of Neuropsychiatry
and Behavioral Science
Senior Medical Director
Behavioral Health
Prisma Health (Midlands)
and Special Advisor to USC President
Health Care Innovations

University of South Carolina



Rich Rogers Secretary Senior Vice President Chief Information Officer Prisma Health



Christian Soura
Executive Vice President
South Carolina
Hospital Association



letter from the chief executive officer

Kathy Schwarting, MHA
Palmetto Care Connections



What a busy and wonderful year this has been for Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) striving towards digital and health equity through the use of broadband, telehealth, and technology since COVID-19! On the journey to increase telehealth adoption in South Carolina, PCC has developed a focus on infrastructure, education, training, and digital skills.

I am proud to share the impact of PCC's Broadband Consortium statewide and nationally. Since 2013, PCC has saved healthcare providers in South Carolina more than **\$42 million** in broadband costs. Nationwide, PCC has saved eligible healthcare providers more than **\$74 million** in broadband costs.

Telehealth education through webinars and the Annual Telehealth Summit continues to be a priority at PCC. We were finally back in person at our 10th Annual Telehealth Summit, and it was amazing! The Summit showcased a legislative panel, payer panel, and other diverse sessions that were supportive of telehealth and broadband to reach **250 registrants and 26 sponsors.** As co-chair of the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA), PCC and SCTA collaborate to provide telehealth education and implementation support across the state. During Telehealth Awareness Week, together SCTA and PCC covered advocacy and outreach on all levels with legislators, state agencies, community-based organizations, clinicians, and patients.

During the covid-19 pandemic, telehealth adoption by healthcare providers grew at an exponential rate. A moment of feeling accomplished faded as we began to realize the needs of the patient for infrastructure, education, training, and digital skills to improve telehealth adoption. PCC seized the opportunity to close the gap by launching its digital inclusion program. Through our digital inclusion program, PCC has reached nearly **1,000 South Carolinians** in rural and underserved communities in **13 Counties** and counting! Each program participant received in person digital literacy training with a telehealth segment, a laptop or tablet, and assistance with affordable internet solutions. Through digital inclusion, PCC tapped into an even more aggressive grassroots level and actually touched the patient. We are truly honored to have worked with these amazing individuals over the last year. This would not have been possible without the support of our funding partners and community-based organizations.

I am honored to share the hard work of our PCC staff and partners that was accomplished in 2022. We look forward to working with partners, community leaders, and our Board of Directors in 2023 to continue to address telehealth, and healthcare access in our rural and underserved populations.





PCC has worked
and will continue to work
diligently to ensure our
patients and healthcare
facilities have access for
telehealth and other healthcare
needs. What an amazing difference
Palmetto Care Connections makes
across not only the CareSouth
Carolina service area, but the
entire state of South Carolina."

- Ann Lewis, CEO CareSouth Carolina, Inc.

2022 Partnership Award

CareSouth Carolina presented Palmetto Care Connections with its Partnership Award. Palmetto Care Connections provides broadband and telehealth support services to CareSouth Carolina, Inc.





The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Connected Care Pilot Program awarded \$7,199,892 to the broadband consortium of South Carolina, formerly known as the Palmetto State Providers Network (PSPN) led by Palmetto Care Connections. The funding will enable five federally qualified health centers and one hospital system to provide broadband internet access services, remote patient monitoring, and video consults to 5,000 primarily low-income South Carolinians suffering from chronic conditions and infectious diseases. In addition, the funding will provide health care provider broadband data connections, a connected care telehealth platform and data analytics to facilitate synchronous telehealth services for an estimated 18,000 patients in 13 counties.

- 57,125 qualifying patients will gain access to internet services to better control their healthcare outcomes
- Consortium members serve a predominantly rural and underserved population that includes veterans and low income households
- Some of the providers in this program exceed 95% of their patient volumes living below the 135% poverty level

Partners:

Federally Qualified Health Centers
CareSouth Carolina, Inc.
Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center
Little River Medical Center
Rural Health Services
Tandem Health

Hospital System
Tidelands Health

The counties that are in the health care organizations' service areas to be impacted by the pilot program are Aiken, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Fairfield, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Lexington, Marlboro, Newberry, Richland, and Sumter.

The last few
years have made it
abundantly clear that
expanding telehealth
programs to every corner of our
state is of the utmost importance
in advancing our public health
missions. This funding will have an
immediate impact on expanding
access, quality, and affordability of
health care statewide and will help
bring us closer to providing
immediate health care access
to the fingertips of all
South Carolinians."

-SC Governor Henry McMaster

IMP/ECT at a glance



\$1.3 Million Digital Literacy Funding

PCC has been able to provide digital literacy trainings, educate the community about affordable internet solutions, distribute digital devices, and offer tech support to South Carolinians with funding provided by multiple organizations.



248 Hours Digital Literacy Training

PCC has partnered with schools, churches, libraries, and senior centers as training sites to increase digital literacy in South Carolina, and provided more than 200 hours of in person training.



896Digital Literacy Graduates

Through various partnerships with community based organizations, PCC has trained 896 South Carolinians.

This was my first experience! I loved it. I truly feel every subject discussed was important. The setting, temperature, entertainment, and vendors were all just perfect.

-2022 Telehealth Summit Attendee





\$42 Million

Broadband Savings in South Carolina

Since 2013, PCC has saved healthcare providers in South Carolina more than \$42 Million in broadband costs.



\$74 Million

Broadband Savings across the Country

Since 2013, PCC has saved healthcare providers in 10 states more than \$74 Million in broadband costs.



\$7.2 Million

FCC Connected Care Pilot Program

PCC received the second largest award in the nation for the Connected Care Pilot Program and the largest award in South Carolina. This award will be used to build a statewide telehealth platform and provide internet access to low income households.



63,413 PCC Website Page Views

PCC continues to provide education about broadband, telehealth, and technology.



250+ Registrants

Registrants PCC Summit

PCC hosted its first in person Summit since 2019 in Charleston, South Carolina. We partnered with 27 sponsors.



10 Telehealth Access Sites

Funding from the HSRA RHND grant has established 10 rural telehealth access sites.



SUPPORT STRATEGIES

The South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA) is a statewide collaboration of many organizations joining forces to expand telehealth services across the state. The SCTA Advisory Council is co-chaired by James McElligott, MD, MSCR, of the Medical University of South Carolina and Kathy Schwarting, MHA, of Palmetto Care Connections.

Supp

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Support Primary Care

Objective: All primary care clinics in the state, with emphasis on Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), will have access to integrated services through telehealth partnerships. These services are intended to support the mission of the primary care clinic as a medical home. emphasizing the importance of local health care infrastructure while mitigating gaps in access to supporting resources.







Objective: All citizens in South Carolina will have affordable and immediately available patient-initiated virtual urgent and other health system-entry level care from an in-state provider. Convenient Care services are designed to engage individual patients through their own available devices in order to optimize utilization and maximize healthcare engagement.



ort Hospitals

e: Every community n our state will have telehealth partnerships ance its services and its

dospital Services
Int partnerships that care between so using telehealth ocus of connecting es from larger ospitals to nity hospitals to but the



Healthy Equity

Objective: Targeted, novel initiatives will close the gap in access to health care services for high-priority health disparities.

Health Equity services will progress towards achieving health equity across the state in specifically identified areas of health disparity.

Palmetto Care Connections is an essential partner within the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance, through their expansive efforts in broadband and connectivity access, telehealth education, and more recently, their incredible work with digital literacy trainings in rural areas of our state. Kathy and her team understand and respond directly to the challenges in health care access in SC's rural communities, and tirelessly advocate for and represent the rural needs of our state within the SC Telehealth Alliance.

> Sonya Ebeling SCTA Director



broadbandsavings by county since 2013



Cherokee \$295,383 \$7,054,737 Greenville \$395,010 **Spartanburg Pickens** \$2,296,376 \$639,889 Chester Union \$64,765 \$284,345 \$1,384,526 Laurens \$4,329 **Fairfield** \$871,610 \$467.186 Newberry \$79,229 \$82,929 Richla Greenwood Saluda \$1,42 \$1,255,942 \$170,986 Lexington \$59,968 \$892,311 Edgefield \$116,557

\$464.597

Barnwell \$400,357

Allendale \$809.859

\$263,71

\$354,82

\$178

As the leader of the South Carolina Broadband Consortium (also known as PSPN), Palmetto Care Connections assists eligible health care providers in applying for broadband savings through the FCC's Healthcare Connect Fund Program.

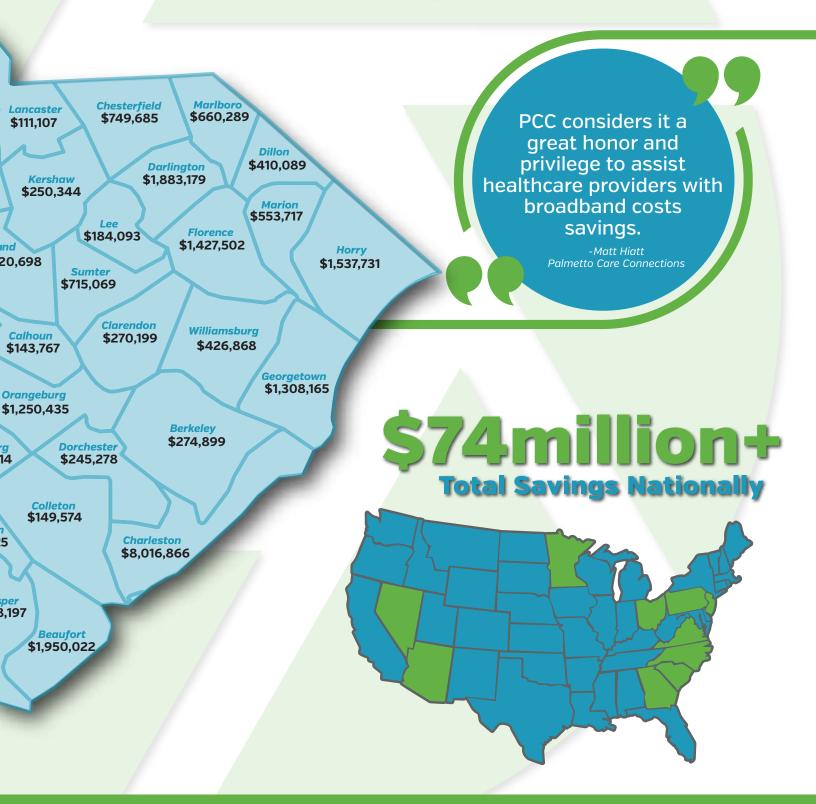
Savings by eligible organization type in South Carolina

Community Health Center	\$9,618,839
Community Mental Health Center	\$753,667
Dedicated ER of Rural, For-Profit Hospital	\$147,038
Local Health Department or Agency	\$174,865
Not-For-Profit Hospital	\$6,756,902
Teaching Hospital or Medical School	\$4,621,841
Rural Health Clinic	\$748,949
Not-For-Profit Skilled Nursing Facility	\$505,267



\$42million+

Total Savings for South Carolina





managedITservices

24/7 Advanced Performance Monitoring

224¹

Managed Server



Proactive Preventative Maintenance



Managed Workstation (PC)



Security and Backup Management



managedITservices

for health care providers serving rural or underserved communities

Managed Backup



Reduced Business Impact



Increased Productivity



Managed Security





Palmetto Care Connections offers remote Managed IT Services to rural health clinics, federally qualified health centers, behavioral health clinics, and a critical access hospital that provides regular, preventative maintenance that increases the functionality and security of network devices.



client testiménials

- What Our Clients say -



I wish more organizations we worked with had such a service covering their security.

Auditor Fairfield Behavioral Health



Contracting with PCC (Matt) for our IT services continues to be an excellent choice for our organization. Matt is great to work with. Always professional, responsive and forward-thinking about out IT needs.

The ALPHA Center



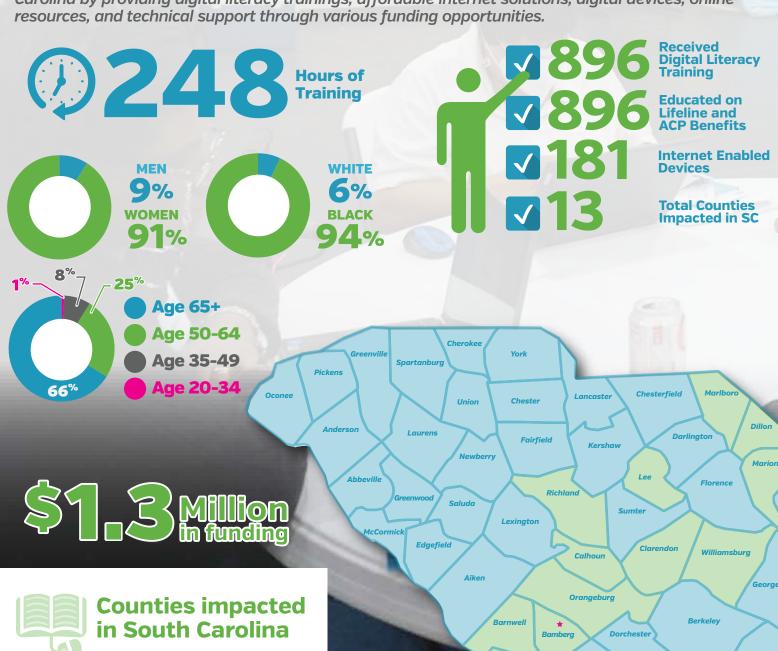
PCC has been a great choice for our nonprofit agency to have access to top notch Managed IT Services while staying within our budget. Trustworthy expertise and prompt response to problems makes PCC second to none.

Fairfield Behavioral Health



digital inclusion

According to the South Carolina Broadband Office, 137,000 households statewide remain without the standard internet service recommended by the Federal Communications Commission. Since 2021, Palmetto Care Connections has been on a mission to help close the digital divide in South Carolina by providing digital literacy trainings, affordable internet solutions, digital devices, online resources, and technical support through various funding opportunities.



Allendale

Colleton

Beaufort

Jasper

Charleston



Counties scheduled

for trainings in

South Carolina



impactstories



Candyce Brooks
Director of Marion County
Adult Education

Digital skills are essential for students today to complete homework assignments, communicate with instructors, take tests, and more. Marion County Adult Education (MCAE) assists individuals with attaining their GED (General Educational Development) high school diploma completion, and job training. The collaboration between MCAE and Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) was the perfect solution to a problem presented to Candyce Brooks, Director of Marion County Adult Education.

As a part of its community outreach, Marion County Adult Education partnered with Palmetto Care Connections to host a digital literacy training for Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) students between the ages of 20 to 48 years old attending the Marion County School of Practical Nursing. PCC created a workforce development curriculum to teach fundamental computer skills to support the students with their educational goals.

The success of this LPN training led to two additional digital literacy trainings at MCAE because of "word of mouth". While the first training was focused on workforce development, the others centered around the general needs of beginners to thrive in a technology-based era.

PCC's Digital Literacy Training aligns directly with Marion County Adult Education Services' purpose and mission of lifelong learning. It is the perfect partnership of community outreach to not only impact individuals, but their families as well. 90 individuals have participated in the trainings hosted at our center, but even more have been impacted to have access to a device, internet, and knowledge of services provided by Marion County Adult Education Services.

-Candyce Brooks

Director of Marion County Adult Education

Access to computers and the internet is an integral part of a student's life. As a single mother, having a laptop at home would be more convenient.

Tracey learned about Palmetto Care Connections' Digital Literacy Training at a Telehealth Community Kick-off Event. She believed the training was an opportunity to learn more about telehealth, increase her digital skills, and enhance her home-school life balance with having a laptop at home.

Since the training, Tracey has enrolled in nursing school and is more confident in the quality of her assignments having a laptop at home to access school information at any time. Tracey has also enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program, one of the Federal Communications Commission's programs to help eligible households pay for internet service. By having internet and a laptop at home Tracey is one step closer to reaching her career goals to become a health care leader in the field of nursing.



Tracey Missoh

Digital Literacy Training Graduate



partners

Partners of PCC's Digital Inclusion Program include funders, referral partners, and training site locations.

- AARP
- Allendale County Leisure Center
- Allendale County Library
- Bamberg County Library
- Bamberg County Office on Aging*
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School
- Barnwell County Library
- Barnwell/Blackville Generations
 Unlimited*
- Bible Way Church of Atlas Road
- Blackville Community Center
- Calhoun County Council of Aging*
- Center of Minority Affairs*
- Centers for Disease Control
- Denmark Technical College
- Dillon County Council on Aging*
- Estill Public Library*
- Food Share of South Carolina*
- Hampton County Council on Aging*
- Kramden Institute
- Lake View Library*
- Lee County Council on Aging*
- Lenovo

- Marion County Adult Education*
- Orangeburg County Library
- Orangeburg County Office on Aging*
- Orangeburg First Baptist Church
- PC's for People
- Richard Carroll Elementary School
- Rural LISC
- South Carolina Department on Aging
- South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- South Carolina Office of Rural Health
- South Carolina's Rural Innovation Network*
- South State Bank
- Southeastern Housing and Community
 Development*
- Spectrum
- Summerton Town Hall
- T-Mobile
- Town of Kingstree Recreation*
- Verizon
- Vital Aging of Williamsburg County*
- Wade Hampton High School
- * Organizations that assisted in identifying participants for the program





Palmetto Care Connections (PCC), Southeastern Housing and Community Development and Clemson Rural Health partnered to host a Telehealth Kick-Off Community Event at the Bamberg Villas, a housing development complex, on May 19, 2022 reaching over 100 community members.

Top Reasons For Not Using Telehealth

Of Participants
Surveyed have
not used
telehealth

Patient is not familiar with how to use telehealth.

Patient's health care provider does not offer telehealth.

Patient does not have internet access.

PCC's Digital Literacy Training Telehealth Implementation Services

PCC's Digital Navigator

Connecting People to Resources



I am a double amputee. If this (telehealth) would have been in my life, I probably would not have been a double amputee. Everyone needs to take advantage of this opportunity.

-Leslie Hayes Bamberg Mayor Pro Tem





COUNTRY

SYSTEM

sc virtual telehealth access network



With funding from a HRSA grant, PCC has been able to establish a virtual telehealth access network comprised of an independent local pharmacy, senior centers, churches and an affordable housing development complex. These community based organizations believe in the benefit of telehealth to remove barriers to care for their members. We currently have 10 Telehealth Access Sites in over 6 counties in South Carolina.

program spotlight

Ehrhardt Pharmacy Chronic Disease Self Management and Medication Therapy Management Classes



FIRST-EVER
TELEHEALTH
APPOINTMENT

LIKED USING TELEHEALTH TO SEE A DOCTOR

WOULD USE AGAIN AND RECOMMEND TELEHEALTH TO OTHERS







PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCED A MORE THAN 1% REDUCTION IN A1C

PARTICIPANTS
EXPERIENCED
CONTROLLED BLOOD
PRESSURE <130/80

PARTICIPANTS
RECEIVED MEDICATION
MANAGEMENT THERAPY





education

In collaboration with telehealth partners, Palmetto Care Connections hosts educational events for healthcare providers and patients. In 2022, PCC hosted its first in in-person Summit since 2019. The 10th Annual Telehealth Summit of South Carolina brought together healthcare leaders across the state to Charleston to focus on the role of telehealth in digital and health equity. Guest speakers covered topics such as reimbursement, policy, best practices, and more. SC Representative Mark Smith, SC Representative Deon Tedder, and SC Representative Elizabeth "Spencer" Wetmore led a panel discussion about the Landscape of Telehealth and Broadband in South Carolina. The 2022 Telehealth Awards were presented by South Carolina Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette. With the support of the planning committee, speakers, poster presenters, poster judges, and attendees, the 10th Annual Telehealth Summit of SC was a success!







ANNUAL TELEHEALTH SUMMIT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

NOVEMBER 2021

250+27 REGISTRANTS SPONSORS

Diamond Sponsor

SC Telehealth Alliance

Platinum Sponsor

McLeod Health

Medical University of South Carolina

Prisma Health

SC Department of Health and Human Services

SC Department of Mental Health

Segra

Spectrum Enterprise

T-Mobile

Networking Reception Sponsor

Carium Iron Bow

Pexip

Gold Sponsor

Blue Cross Blue Shield of SC

Clemson Rural Health

DAODAS

Kaieet

Silver Sponsor

Hicuity Health

SC Primary Health Care Association

Bronze Sponsor

Amwell

Blue Cirrus Consulting

DoxvMe

Pfizer

SC Area Health Education Consortium

SC Office of Rural Health

Southeastern Telehealth Resource Center (SETRC)

SC Hospital Association

USC School of Medicine

Excellent conference! Loved the registration check-in process. It was awesome. Attendees and staff were so friendly and welcoming. Also loved the sessions. Great conference! Look forward to participating again.

-2022 Telehealth Summit Sponsor

telehealthawardwinners



Telehealth State Champion

Meera Narasimhan, MD, DFAPA
Prisma Health (Midlands)
and USC
(pictured with
SC Lt. Governor Pamela Evette)



Telehealth Innovator

Brandon Welch, PhD Doxy Me

(pictured with SC Lt. Governor Pamela Evette)



Telehealth Program of Excellence

Prisma Health School-based Telehealth

(pictured: Kimberly South, MMC and SC Lt. Governor Pamela Evette)



Telehealth Program of Excellence

CareSouth Carolina School-based Telehealth

(Pictured: Staci Cassidy and Jeri Andrews, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC with SC Lt. Governor Pamela Evette)



Telehealth Trailblazer

Donna Avant, RPh, CDCES Ehrhardt Pharmacy, LLC (Pictured with Davia Smith, PCC)



Telehealth Pioneer

Connie Guille, MD
Medical University of
South Carolina
(pictured with
SC Lt. Governor Pamela Evette)



Scientific Poster Award

Telehealth Etiquette and Equity Educationto Address The Needs Of Patients, Providers And Communities Medical University of South Carolina

(pictured: Ragan Dubose-Morris, PhD with SC Lt. Governor Pamela Evette)



People's Choice Poster Award

No Drama, Caitlin Kickham, MS, APRN, FNP-C Hailey Britt Clemson Rural Health

(pictured: Caitlin Kickham, MS, APRN, FNP-C with SC Lt. Governor Pamela Evette)



-2022 Telehealth Summit Attendee

advocacy highlights

Meetings with SC Governor McMaster



Palmetto Care Connections continues to serve as an advocate across the state and nation for rural and underserved communities. In 2022, PCC's CEO, Kathy Schwarting, joined several events with legislators and the Governor of South Carolina.

National Foundation for Women Legislators Annual Conference















ABOUT - TECHNOLOGY - BROADBAND - TELEHEALTH - EVENTS -



Telehealth Support & Service

What is Palmetto Care Connections?

Palmetto Care Connections is a telehealth network that assists health care providers in connecting rural and underserved South Carolinians to quality services through broadband, technology and telehealth programs. Telehealth refers to a broad scope of remote health care services, including clinical care (called telemedicine) and non-clinical services such as provider training, consultations between providers and continuing medical education.



IAL MEDIA!











1880 Main Highway | Bamberg, SC 29003 803.245.2672 | www.palmettocareconnections.org











