annualreport Digitally Focused. Equity Driven.





focusareas

Technology

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.

mission

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

vision

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





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

board ()f clirectors 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



James McElligott, MD, MSCR Executive Medical Director Center for Telehealth Medical University of South Carolina Co-Chair, South Carolina Telehealth Alliance



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

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



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



Rich Rogers Secretary Senior Vice President Chief Information Officer Prisma Health



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



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.



Pictured L to R: Matt Hiatt, MSITM, PMP, Chief Technology Officer, Palmetto Care Connections, Jeri Andrews, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, Associate Medical Director, CareSouth Carolina, Inc. and Kathy Schwarting, MHA, Chief Executive Officer, Palmetto Care Connections

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."

C. SANE

- 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.



57/2 Millon Connected Care Pilot Clant

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/ACT 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.



896 Digital 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.



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





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.

Service Extension

Objective: All citizens of South Carolina will have equitable access to ambulatory care. Telehealth modalities will be used in the ambulatory setting to extend the reach of services that would otherwise be limited by travel and related barriers to care. **Objective** hospital i access to that enhafinances These *H* represe extend hospitals with a for resource urban ho commun througho state.

Supp



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.





Convenient Care

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

0

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

ospital Services nt partnerships that care between s using telehealth ocus of connecting es from larger ospitals to hity hospitals out the



Healthy Equity

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

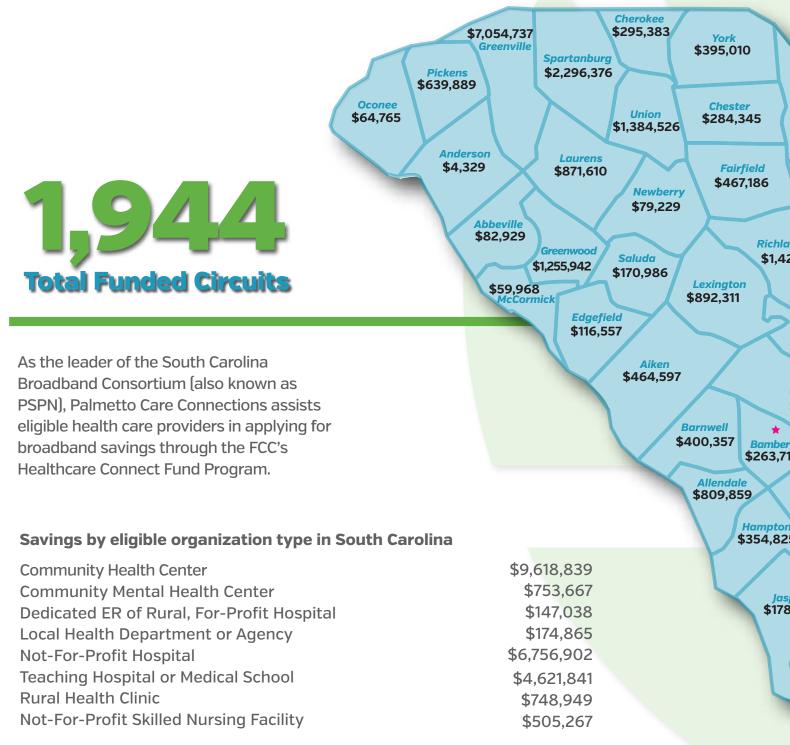
Health Equity services will progress towards achieving health equity across the state in specifically identified areas of health disparity.

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



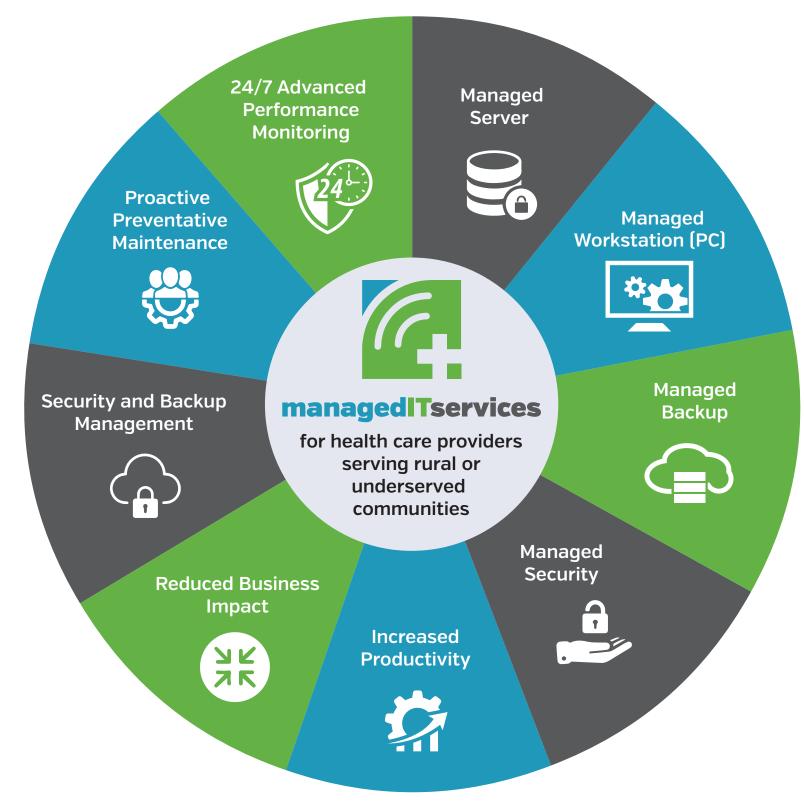


\$42million+ Total Savings for South Carolina





managedITservices





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

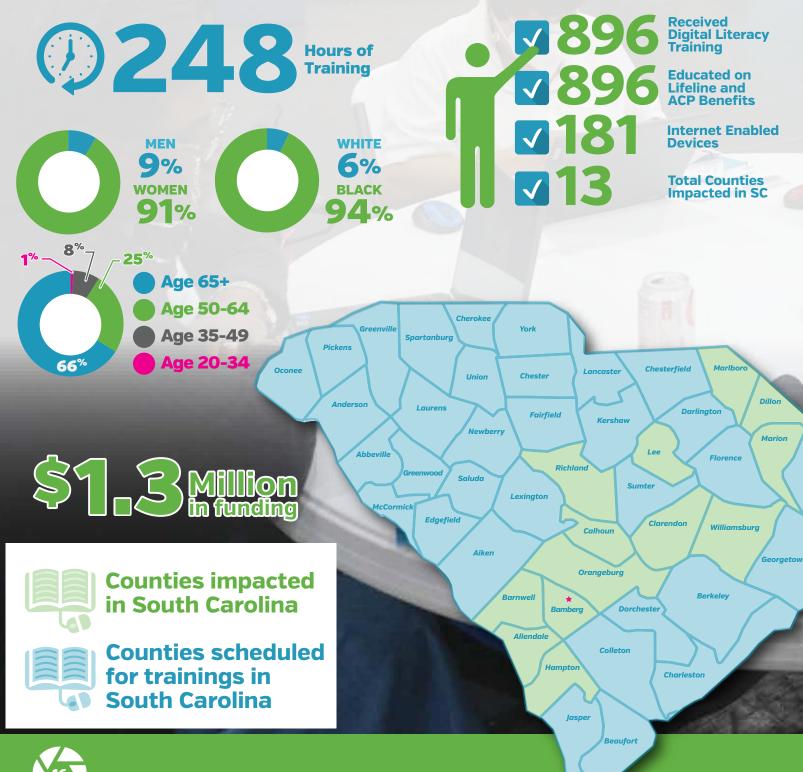
PCC has been a great choice for our nonprofit agency to have access to top notch Managed IT Services while staying within our budget. Trustworthy expertise and prompt response to problems makes PCC second to none.

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.



testimonials

"My mother has cancer and must ride transportation to her doctor in Orangeburg. I now have a device that I can help her connect with her providers. This will keep her from being exposed to illnesses while her immune system is weak. I am very appreciative to PCC for the tools."

> Hattie White Bamberg County 2022

Horry



"I love this class – being around positive people and getting to know new things. I have high blood pressure and diabetes, so I want to use this computer to keep up with my doctors' appointments."

> Rosa Abney Barnwell County 2022



"I was diagnosed 5 years ago as a diabetic and have been wanting to connect with Donna Avant for Diabetes Education, but did not have a device to connect to her. I am so excited to connect to her so that I can improve my health."

Dorothy Lingard Allendale County 2022



17

impact stories



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.

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.

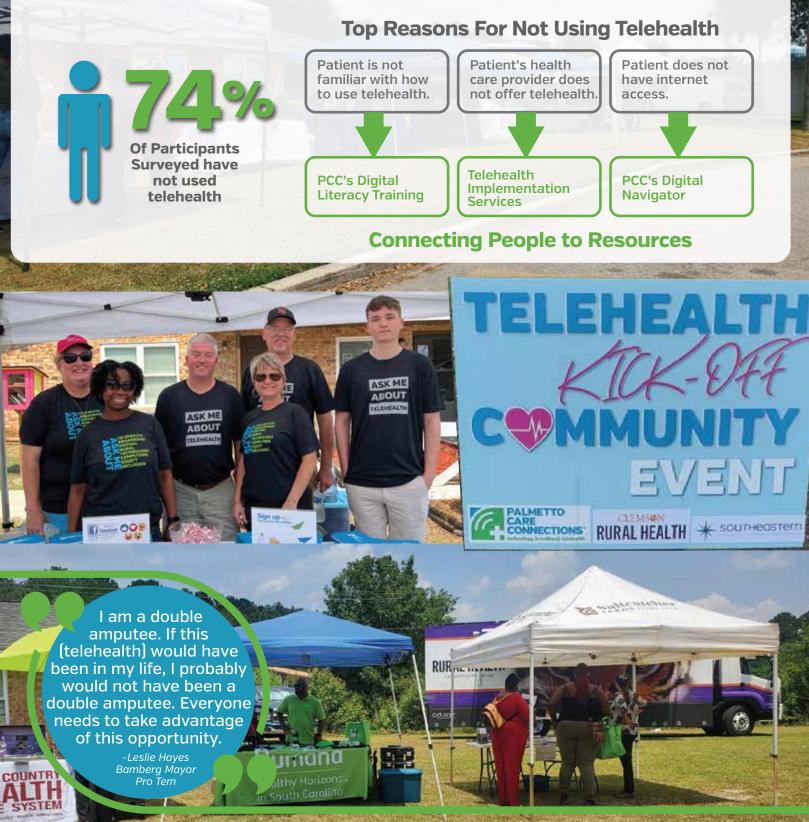
- AARP
- Allendale County Leisure Center
- Allendale County Library
- Bamberg County Library
- Bamberg County Office on Aging*
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School
- Barnwell County Library
- Barnwell/Blackville Generations Unlimited*
- Bible Way Church of Atlas Road
- Blackville Community Center
- Calhoun 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.



20

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







telehealth awareness week

Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) celebrated Telehealth Awareness Week, September 18-24, 2022, by hosting several community-based events. PCC partnered with a church, a senior center, and an affordable housing development complex, to host Telehealth Tech Talk with the Doc in Allendale, Bamberg, and Orangeburg counties reaching more than 60 community members. Telehealth Tech Talk with the Doc created an opportunity for community members to see a mock telehealth demonstration, talk with a local health care provider about telehealth, and learn about digital inclusion resources solutions such as the Affordable Connectivity Program and PCC's Digital Literacy Training.





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

Diamond Sponsor

SC Telehealth Alliance

REGISTRAN

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**

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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** DoxyMe Pfizer SC Area Health Education Consortium SC Office of Rural Health Southeastern Telehealth Resource Center (SETRC) SC Hospital Association **USC School of Medicine**

ons ord

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

telehe



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)



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

 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)

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







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.







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