

NC Department of Health and Human Services

Telehealth Best Practices

Sharing practical ideas during the COVID-19 pandemic



RCC (Relay Conference Captioning)
Participants can access real-time captioning for this webinar here:
<https://www.captionedtext.com/client/event.aspx?EventID=4409135&CustomerID=324>



Lakeisha Moore
Office of Rural Health

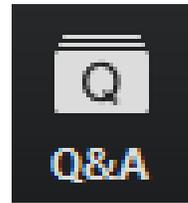
Dr. John E. Jenkins
Greensboro AHEC

Kim Schwartz, CEO
Roanoke Chowan
Community Health Center

April 6, 2020

Logistics for Telehealth Best Practices

Questions during the live webinar

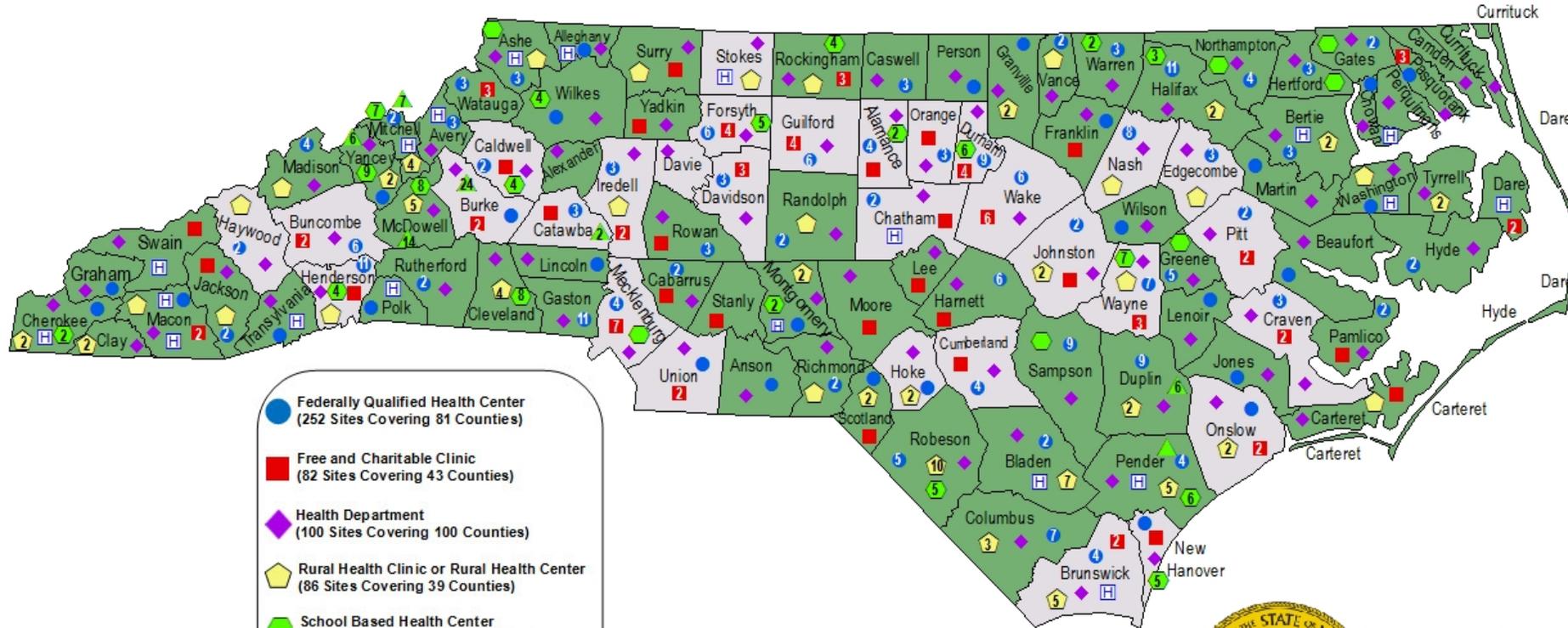


Technical assistance

technicalassistanceCOVID19@gmail.com

WELCOME SAFETY NET SITES

North Carolina Office of Rural Health SFY 2019 Safety Net Sites



- Federally Qualified Health Center
(252 Sites Covering 81 Counties)
- Free and Charitable Clinic
(82 Sites Covering 43 Counties)
- ◆ Health Department
(100 Sites Covering 100 Counties)
- ⬠ Rural Health Clinic or Rural Health Center
(86 Sites Covering 39 Counties)
- ⬡ School Based Health Center
(100 Sites Covering 26 Counties)
- ▲ School Based Health Center Telemedicine
(60 Sites Covering 7 Counties)
- ⊠ Critical Access Hospital
(20 Sites Covering 19 Counties)

■ Rural County (70 Counties)
■ Urban County (30 Counties)

*Numbers inside symbols indicate the number of sites within the respective county
 Federally Qualified Health Center data: last updated on February 5, 2019
 Free and Charitable Clinic data: last updated on February 5, 2019
 Health Department data: last updated on February 5, 2019
 ORH Supported Rural Health Center data: last updated on February 5, 2019
 Federal CMS Certified Rural Health Clinic data: last updated on February 5, 2019
 School Based Health Center data: last updated on January 23, 2018
 School Based Health Center (Telemedicine) data: last updated on January 23, 2018
 Critical Access Hospital data: last updated on February 5, 2019



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
 HUMAN SERVICES**
 Office of Rural Health

AGENDA AND HOUSEKEEPING

Agenda

- CME is available ([Ryan Wilkins](#))
- Presentation of Telehealth Best Practices in responding to COVID-19 ([Dr. John E. Jenkins](#))
- Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center Telehealth Best Practices ([Kim Schwartz and Jen Cobb](#))
- Question and Answer ([Robyn McArdle](#))
 - Please submit your questions through Q&A



Housekeeping

- This Webinar is being recorded and will be available on the ORH and AHEC websites with slides
- If we are unable to ask the presenters your question during the session, we will consider the question for future webinar topics. You can also e-mail questions after the session to questionsCOVID19telehealth@gmail.com
- The goal of today's webinar is to highlight best practices and associated workflows specific to COVID-19.
- There are additional webinars on COVID-19 clinical care, NC Medicaid updates, and more listed on the NC AHEC COVID-19 Resource [webpage](#).



Attention All Participants
To Receive CME Credit
Text Code: **C7D46**
To: **336-793-9317**

***MyAHEC account is required for credit**
For more instructions visit: www.nwahec.org/textreg

ACCREDITATION

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the North Carolina Medical Society (NCMS) through the joint providership of Area L AHEC, Office of Rural Health, NC AHEC Program Office, Northwest AHEC, Greensboro AHEC. Area L AHEC is accredited by the NCMS to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

CREDIT

The Health Education Foundation/Area L AHEC designates this educational activity for a maximum of **1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits(s)**™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. **All non-physicians will receive 0.1 hour of Continuing Education Units (CEUs), which is the equivalent of 1.0 contact hours.**

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The Health Education Foundation/Area L AHEC adheres to ACCME Essential Areas and Policies regarding industry support of continuing medical education. Commercial support for the program and faculty relationships within the industry will be disclosed at the activity. Speakers and planners will also state when off-label or experimental use of drugs or devices is incorporated in their presentations. **Presenters and planners for this activity do not have commercial relationships and that they will not be discussing any off-label or investigational drugs. No commercial support has been received for this activity.**

DEFINITION OF A COMMERCIAL INTEREST

A commercial interest is any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing healthcare goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients. The ACCME does not consider providers of clinical service directly to patients to be commercial interests. Within the context of this definition and limitation, the ACCME considers the following types of organizations to be eligible for accreditation and free to control the content of CME:

Government organizations, Non-health care related companies, Liability insurance providers, Health insurance providers, Group medical practices, For-profit hospitals, For-profit rehabilitation centers, For-profit nursing homes, Blood banks, and 501-C Non-profit organizations (Note, ACCME screens 501c organizations for eligibility. Those that advocate for commercial interests as a 501c organization are not eligible for accreditation in the ACCME system. They cannot serve in the role of joint sponsor, but they can be a commercial supporter.)

How Practices are Succeeding with Virtual Visits



Our Shared Goals for Telehealth:

Leverage Virtual Visits for

- COVID-19 screenings
- Acute Issues
- Chronic Follow-up

To keep our patients safe during the pandemic



Clear on-line information and guidance



Proactive conversion of routine follow-ups to virtual visits



Offering virtual visits for simple acute issues



Practice management of at-risk patients

CREATING AWARENESS : OPENING THE DIGITAL FRONT DOOR

THE CASWELL MEDICAL STORY

Caswell Family Medical Center > Telehealth

TELEHEALTH



Telehealth Services From Caswell Family Medical Center, Inc.

When we first heard of **Coronavirus**, no one had any expectation that it would change our lives the way it has. Nevertheless, here we are. We trust that you are doing your part in helping to flatten the curve by complying with the stay-at-home order, practicing social distancing and most importantly: keeping those hands washed!

For CFMC and JAHC, business continues to be anything but normal. Today marks a new change for us: Telehealth. We now have capacity to provide healthcare services to established

patients through video, sometimes referred to as telemedicine. For our patients that don't have access to video, we can provide phone/voice visits. If our medical staff determines a patient cannot be safely treated using Telehealth, he/she will be brought into the office. We have implemented additional measures to ensure both patient and staff safety to the greatest extent possible. We have prepared the following 'frequently asked questions' that may help you better understand how this service works:

How do you set up an appointment with a provider by phone or video?

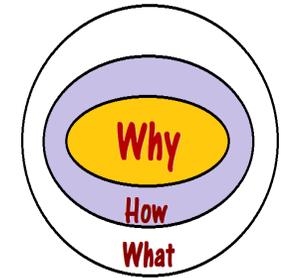
The process starts with a phone call. Simply call our office and our staff will take you step-by-step through determining the best and safest way to ensure you get the health care you need.

What will you have to pay?

Every health insurance is different; however, all are quickly updating their plans to cover Telehealth. Please call the number on the back of your insurance card to learn more about your specific coverage.

<https://caswellmedical.org/telehealth/>

- Give a clear statement of the “why”
 - The visit is secure and we want you to be safe.
- FAQ approach to creating awareness
 - How?
 - Cost?
 - What technology is needed?
 - Who is performing the visit?
 - Can I still come into the office?
 - Accepting new patients?
 - Other services? Behavioral Health?
- If you have a question call 555-555-5555



Always give a number
manned by a person
who knows the FAQ's

Continuously
improve the
processes

KEY COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESS:

- 1. Routing patient calls to set up the telephonic or telehealth visit.
 - Provide a script why virtual are a safe and secure option in the COVID-19 crisis.
 - Never deny an in-person request but be persuasive
 - Create a process to sign-up the patient for your portal or the application you are using
- 2. Publish your FAQ's on your web site for both information and marketing.
- 3. Know the platform: does the patient need a download, have they turned on their mic and camera?



A LOOK INSIDE: THE SUCCESSFUL OFFICE THE EAGLE PRIMARY CARE STORY



EAGLE
PHYSICIANS

- Promote virtual visits with every patient
 - Promote Telehealth as an option for clients on your patient portal, in your practice newsletter, via email, and on your social media page.
 - When clients call to book or reschedule appointments, offer Telehealth as an alternative.
- Redeploy team members
 - Foot traffic has significantly decreased
 - Check-in, check-out and rooming personnel now trained in telehealth support roles
- Document the visits in standard office visit notes with guidelines for providers about virtual consent

■ Creative solutions

- **Freedom to innovate:** Eagle has a virtual visit portal through their EHR but some providers found it “too clunky” and were given the freedom to use “free” modalities to connect with their patients.
- **New Patients:** team members guided new patients through quick registration processes
- **Fear of flying:** Patients expressed concern about coming into the office for routine non-COVID-19 testing. Eagle set up an “outside of the office” lab collection station in an adjacent office.

**The results: One week into virtual visits
Eagle is averaging over 12 virtual visits per provider**

INTERVIEW WITH A SUCCESSFUL PROVIDER

DR HUNTER: FAMILY MEDICINE WORKING IN A MULTI-PROVIDER SITE INCLUDING APPS



- Set personal goals to get his access back to pre-COVID-19 levels
- Experimented with platform choice
 - Goal to find a platform that was easy to invite patients and geared toward medical use
 - Now using a free platform call [Doxy.me](#)
- Uses the medium to its best advantage
 - Has the patients and parents 'help' in the physical exam
 - Was able to lead a parent through an exam that diagnosed acute appendicitis. Referred for US and successful emergent surgery!

Biggest barrier: working with older patients sometimes requires recruiting a family member with the necessary technology

OPERATIONAL PEARLS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Pearls from Practice Calls

- Consider setting up a separate work flow for COVID-19 concerns
- Keeping triage and questions about COVID-19 out of the routine virtual office workflow creates efficiency
- Could be staffed by RN or APP
- Set up a “safe” lab draw site to keep well patients out of exposure risk
- Convert walk-ins to virtual

Best practice from Eden Internal Medicine and Eagle

Resource Websites

DHHS COVID-19

- <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina>
- <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/orh>

NC Area Health Education Centers

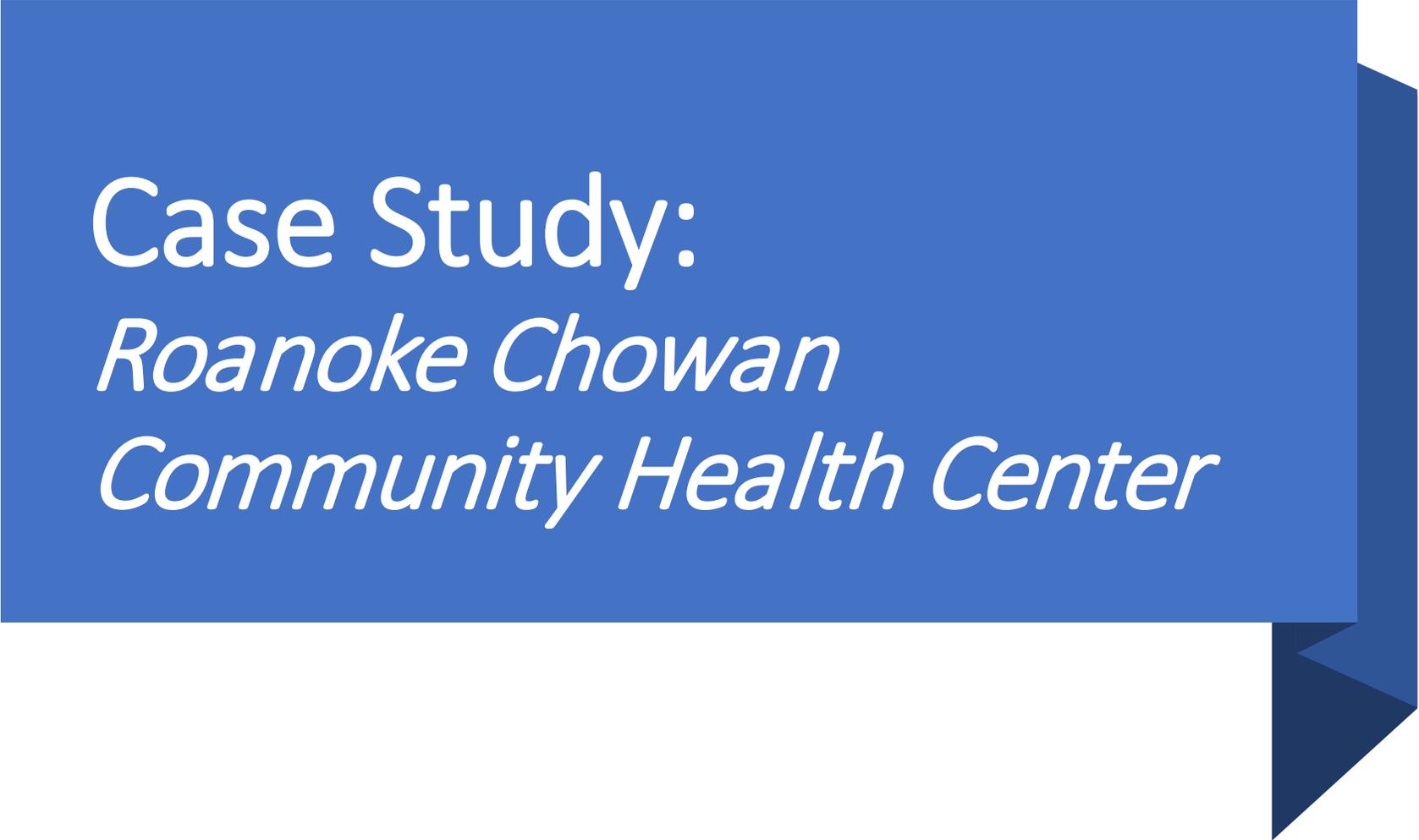
- <https://www.ncahec.net/covid-19/webinars/>

Community Care of NC

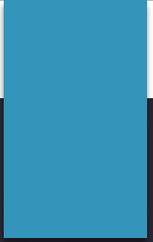
- <https://www.communitycarenc.org/newsroom/coronavirus-covid-19-information>

NC Medical Society

- <https://www.ncmedsoc.org/covid-19/>

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Case Study:
*Roanoke Chowan
Community Health Center*



Telehealth Implementation

IN A COVID CRISIS

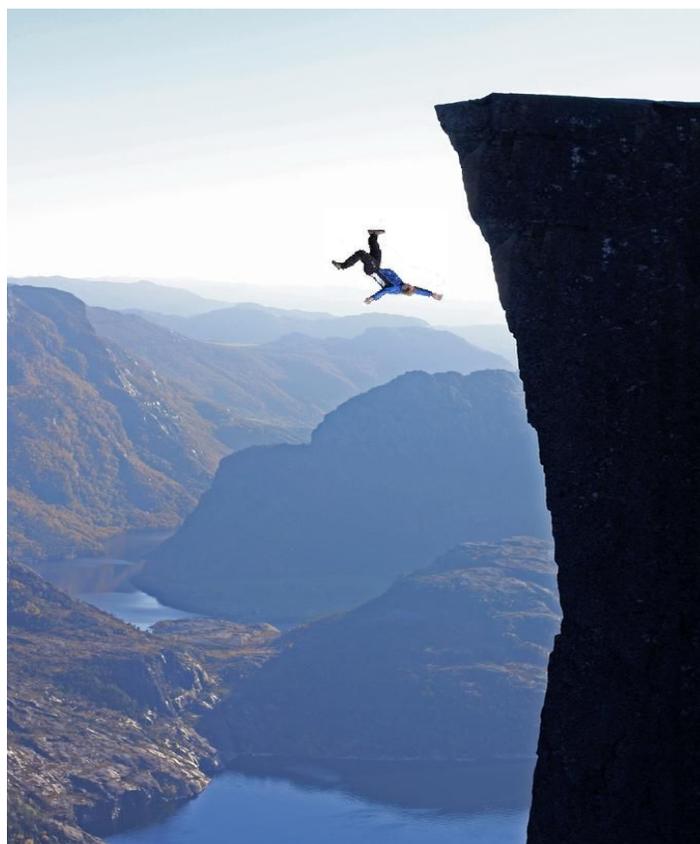
- ▶ Kim Schwartz, CEO
- ▶ Jen Cobb, Revenue Cycle Manager/Telehealth Coordinator



Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center

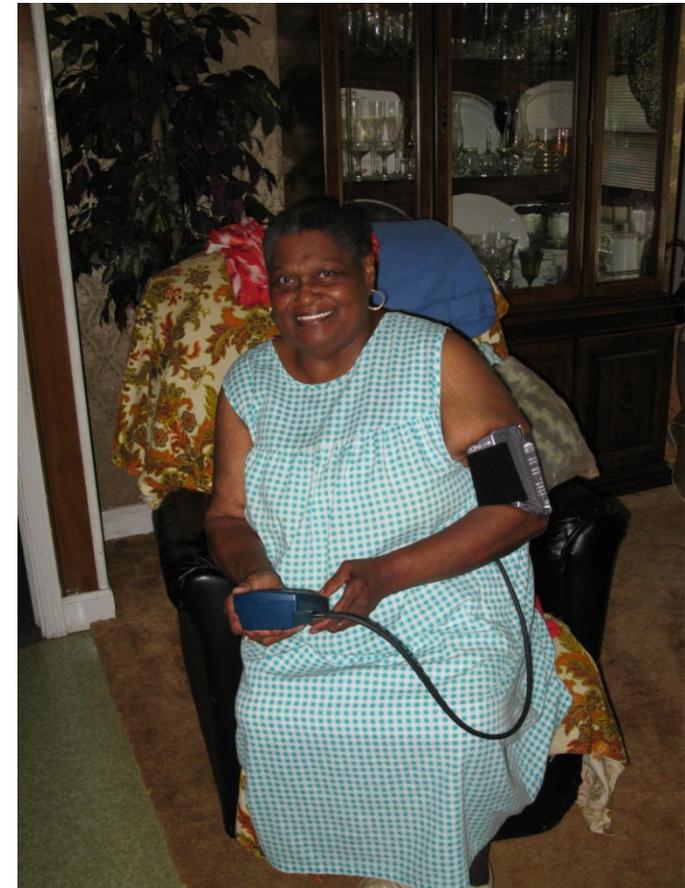


Fall forward, learn fast



RCCHC Telehealth Culture

- ▶ Remote Patient Monitoring since 2006
- ▶ Current – Nurse Case Management
 - ▶ ACO
 - ▶ Medicaid
 - ▶ COVID-19



Tuesday, March 24th

- ▶ OCHIN EPIC, HCCN
- ▶ MyChart portal
- ▶ Prior to COVID-19: 30% MyChart usage rate
 - ▶ Now patient must opt out of MyChart 
- ▶ Turn off automated schedule reminders
- ▶ Began workflow for front desk and created scripts for phone visit change
- ▶ Converted all scheduled visits to phone visits on March 24th
 - ▶ Week prior – below 50% productivity
 - ▶ March 24th – boosted productivity by 30%
 - ▶ Consistently been at about 75% productivity since then

Phone Visits

- ▶ All user meetings, created workflows and scripts
- ▶ Trainings on phone etiquette for clinical staff
 - ▶ For example, reminded clinical staff to compliment the patient on what a good job they did on the phone visit
- ▶ Motivational Interviewing Techniques emphasized
- ▶ Script for phone visit and co-pays
 - ▶ “With the recent threat of the coronavirus and the CDC’s recommendation for distancing ourselves from others, we need to get your appointment changed over to a phone consult rather than having you come into the office. Just so you are aware, your insurance will be billed for the consult with your provider over the phone. Your insurance may charge copays or coinsurance for these visits; however, most have waived these charges because of the current situation.”

PR

- ▶ Lots of patient information was pushed out through Facebook, newspaper articles, website
- ▶ <https://www.roanoke-chowannewsherald.com/2020/03/27/virtual-medicine/>
- ▶ www.rcchc.org
- ▶ Community promotional video in process



The screenshot shows the website for the Roanoke-Chowan News-Herald. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Subscribe', 'Services', 'Classifieds', 'Facebook', 'Specials', 'E-Newsletter Signup', 'About Us', and 'E-Edition'. The main header features the newspaper's name 'Roanoke-Chowan News-Herald.com' with the tagline 'Serving the Roanoke-Chowan Community since 1914' and a weather icon showing 70 degrees. Below the header is a navigation menu with categories like 'HOME', 'NEWS', 'SPORTS', 'OPINION', 'SOCIETY', 'OBITS', 'BUSINESS', 'SCHOOLS', and 'CLASSIFIEDS'. The main content area displays a photograph of three people wearing masks and gloves working at a table outdoors. Below the photo is a caption: 'Ahoskie Comprehensive Care Pharmacy Director Angie Kent-Mitchell (center) is joined on Friday morning by Pharmacy Tech Johnna Godwin (left) and Ag Outreach Tech Jorge Gomez as they prepare for the next patient to use a newly opened drive-up area. Pharmacies locally and nationwide are taking extra precautions in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Staff Photo by Cal Bryant'. To the left of the article is a 'LATEST STORIES' section with three items: 'Del Rania Pike', 'Hattie M. Freeman', and 'Gates County reports first COVID-19 case'. Below the article is a 'Virtual Medicine' section with a byline 'By Cal Bryant', 'Email the author', and 'Published 6:48 pm Friday, March 27, 2020'. The text of the article begins with 'AHOSKIE - Extreme times call for extreme measures. That's the rallying cry of medical providers as they attempt to...'

Friday, March 27th

- ▶ Fast tracked activation of virtual visits utilizing our patient portal
- ▶ Began training providers and their support staff through use of test patient
- ▶ Updated front desk script to identify patients with connectivity to support virtual visit



Who should have a video visit?

- ▶ Anyone who would have had an in-person visit
 - ▶ Infection prevention
 - ▶ Quarantine
 - ▶ Homebound
 - ▶ Check-in visit for controlled substances
 - ▶ Behavioral Health
- ▶ “If you can do it by video, why not by phone?”
 - ▶ Video visits substitute for in-person encounters, not phone calls.
- ▶ Availability of phone visits are still essential due to broadband connectivity issues

Clinical Staff

- ▶ Clinical Support Staff performing their normal duties associated with a patient visit
- ▶ Mimicking the flow of an in person visit
- ▶ Obtain consent
- ▶ Create the **atmosphere of a regular in-person visit**, e.g. if you ordinarily wear a stethoscope around your neck, wear one during the video visit
- ▶ Be aware of your surroundings that are on camera – look what's behind you
- ▶ Remember to protect patient privacy – close you door and signage
- ▶ HIPAA relaxed for platform – not practice

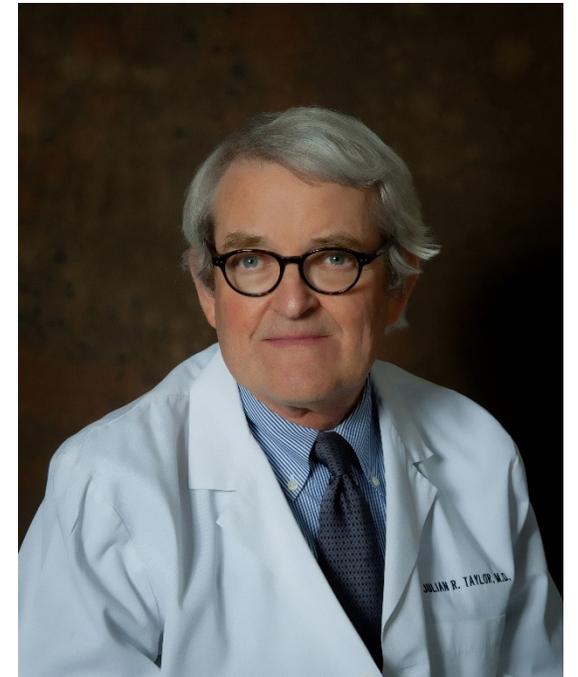
Pre-visit Planning

- ▶ Front office staff outreach:
 - ▶ Educate the patient on how to use the portal
 - ▶ Confirm the appointment
 - ▶ Walk the patient through check in process
- ▶ MyChart Portal allows check in 24 hours prior to visit
- ▶ Outreach 15 minutes prior to appointment to help navigate any barriers
- ▶ Verify phone number in case there is video/audio disruption

During the visit

- ▶ Smile! You're on camera!
- ▶ You just made your patient's life much better by saving them a trip to the doctor.
- ▶ Who's present (Patient? Family members?)

"It has gone surprisingly well, my patients are so appreciative to have the connection, especially at this crucial time." - Dr. Julian Taylor, RCCHC Provider



Documentation Requirements

Telehealth encounters meet the same documentation standards as in-person encounters. However, providers must document the following:

- ▶ That the visit occurred via telemedicine
- ▶ The physical location of the patient
- ▶ The physical location of the provider
- ▶ The names of all persons participating in the telemedicine service (such as family, specialists, etc.) and their role in the encounter

Billing

- ▶ Instructed providers how to code utilizing 99441-3 for phone consults
 - ▶ Any payor specific modifications are made by the EHR in claims processing
 - ▶ COVID crisis coding are the exception
- ▶ Telehealth utilizes E/M codes
 - ▶ Changes are made in the background in claims processing
 - ▶ Place of service identifiers are automated based on type of appointment

Billing

- ▶ Currently holding claims for payors who are continuing to make changes and addendums



Future Plans

- ▶ Utilizing kindle fires purchased through a previous grant for patients to utilize in the parking lot of our sites
 - ▶ iPads are preferred equipment but repurposing what we've got
- ▶ Setting up clinic parking lots as hot spots
- ▶ Maximizing the use of MyChart tools and features

Keep Calm. Carry On.

...(If you know
your) WHY you
can bear any
HOW. -*Viktor E.
Frankl*



TELEHEALTH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Safety Net Health Care Providers

- **Safety Net Provider Questions and Telehealth Technical Assistance Requests – Contact NC Office of Rural Health (ORH)**
- **NC ORH Website - <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/orh>**
- **Email – ORH_Telehealth@dhhs.nc.gov**

Health Care Providers

- **Health Care Providers Questions and Telehealth Technical Assistance Requests – Contact NC Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)**
- **NC AHEC - <https://www.ncahec.net/practice-support/what-we-do/>**
- **Email - practicesupport@ncahec.net**

State COVID-19 website: www.ncdhhs.gov/covid19