

SOUTH CAROLINA Telehealth ALLIANCE

SCTA Advisory Council Meeting

Thursday, May 16th, 2024, 1:00PM – 2:00PM

Virtual – Microsoft Teams

Meeting Attendees:

Sonya Ebeling, Ragan Richardson, Jimmy McElligott, Zharia Jeffries (SCTA/MSUC), Emily Warr, Peter Gardella (MUSC), Ryan Burnaugh (KMSO), Kathy Schwarting (PCC) Robin Gadd-Lane, Carley Howard-Draddy (Prisma), Ebony Legette (McLeod), Margaret Meriwether (SCDMH), Sam Head (SCDHHS), Kevin Bennett (SC CRPH), Elizabeth Harmon (SCHA)

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Wins

- a. Welcome the SCTA's new Administrative Assistant, Zharia Jeffries. Zharia supports the SCTA as well as the MUSC Center for Telehealth. We are thrilled to have her join the team! Zharia can be reached at zharia@sctelehealth.org.

2. Remembering Kate Miccichi



It is with an extremely heavy heart that we share the news of the passing of SCTA Advisory Council Member and friend, Kate Miccichi. Kate served as the Telehealth Director at McLeod Health where she continuously poured her heart into her work, touching the lives of many. Her genuine and compassionate spirit was a light to every room (or virtual meeting) she entered. Kate will be remembered not only for her kindhearted personality but for her passion to better the lives of those around her. The SCTA team is forever grateful to have had Kate as such a special part of our telehealth family.

3. 2024 Annual SC Telehealth Summit

- a. [Palmetto Care Connection's \(PCC\) 12th Annual Telehealth Summit of South Carolina](#) will take place October 28-30, 2024 on Hilton Head Island, SC at the Westin Hilton Head Island Resort & Spa.
- b. Call for presentation abstracts, poster presentations, and award nominations are open with a deadline to submit by June 30, 2024. Call for sponsorships are also open with a deadline of September 15, 2024. Please visit [PCC's Summit](#) webpage for more details.
- c. If you have any questions regarding the Summit, please contact Kathy Schwarting at kathys@palmettocareconnections.org.

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4. SCTA Rural and Primary Care Telehealth Workgroup

a. Provider Survey Action Items

- The SCTA's newest workgroup focused on rural and primary care telehealth distributed a SC provider survey at the end of 2023 to gauge barriers related to telehealth use. The workgroup will be using survey results to guide its 2024 strategies.
- Two of the main barriers to telehealth use identified in the survey that the workgroup is currently working on action plans for are digital literacy and provider training.

b. Next Rural and Primary Care Workgroup Meeting

- The next workgroup meeting will be held in-person Thursday, May 23, 2024, from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. at SCETV directly following the SCTA Stakeholder Retreat. We welcome new workgroup members!

5. SCTA Procedural and Operational Items

a. SCTA Stakeholder Retreat (May 23rd)

- The SCTA will host its "SCTA Stakeholder Retreat" on Thursday, May 23, 2024 in Columbia at SCETV. Calendar invitations have been extended to all SCTA stakeholders.
- The purpose of this retreat is to bring SCTA stakeholders together from across the state to collaborate and discuss ways in which we can be a resource to each other to enhance telehealth in South Carolina.
- In addition to other agenda items, breakout sessions will be held surrounding the following topics:
 - Broadband and digital literacy
 - Telehealth technology
 - Training and education
 - Quality and outcomes
 - Sustainability and advocacy
- The SCTA team is working to create a digital SCTA stakeholder resource guide that will be made available post-retreat. This guide will consist of all stakeholders from various organizations with a main telehealth contact, their organization's telehealth programs, telehealth knowledge areas, and any telehealth support needed. This is one way the SCTA is working to enhance collaboration.
 - If your organization's information has not yet been submitted to be included in this guide, please complete this [survey](#).

6. SCTA Statewide Strategic Plan & Reports

a. CY24Q1 Report Highlights

- Please reference the SCTA CY24Q1 Report to learn how SCTA partners continue to advance and sustain telehealth in our state!

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b. 2023 SCTA Annual Report

- The 2023 SCTA Annual Report is complete and available to view [here](#). A summary of the report can be found on the SCTA's "[Year In Review 2023](#)" webpage.
- The report's theme, "Community focused, equity driven", aligns with the SCTA's mission to improve the health of all South Carolinians through telehealth, targeting underserved populations, regardless of geographical location, and providing the education, tools, and resources to contribute towards statewide equity achievements.
- The 2023 SC Telehealth Champion was written in memory of Dr. Rick Foster who was a founding member of the SCTA and a strong advocate for health equity and telehealth in SC.
- Statistic highlights from the report:
 - **1.2 million+** overall telehealth interactions
 - **760,000+** synchronous telehealth interactions
 - **166,000+** asynchronous telehealth interactions
 - **765+** SCTA-supported telehealth sites
 - **10,900** tele-stroke consults across **25** SC counties
 - **73** SCTA-support hospitals and free-standing emergency departments across **36** SC counties
 - **76,750+** virtual urgent care visits
 - **294,200+** remote patient monitoring interactions
 - **203** schools utilizing school-based telehealth across **31** SC counties
- The SCTA team has extra hard copies of the report available. Please reach out to SCTA Admin Assistant, Zharia at zharia@sctelehealth.org if you would like some shipped to your organization.

7. Legislative and Advocacy Efforts

a. State Updates:

- **Telehealth & Telemedicine Modernization Act Enacted**
 - On March 11, 2024, SC Governor McMaster signed [The Telehealth and Telemedicine Modernization Act](#) (Act 120) into law. The legislation was a product of multiple years of collaboration between telehealth champions, payers, and legislators. A tip sheet with the act's key changes has been created and made available for public use on the [SCTA's website](#).
 - The SCTA in partnership with Palmetto Care Connection hosted a webinar to discuss the bill. The webinar recording can be found on PCC's website [here](#).
- **Payer Scorecard**
 - An updated [SC Payer Scorecard](#) was uploaded to the SCTA website to reflect the status of certain flexibilities slated at the end of 2024. The scorecard lists the SCTA's priorities and their coverage status by the major payers in SC.
 - We remain hopeful that these current flexibilities will expand beyond their current scheduled expiration. (See federal section below for current bills that address these flexibilities).

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- An updated version of the 2024 SCTA Payer Priorities document will be shared with the Advisory Council for review in the coming weeks. Council members are asked to review and consider prioritization of these priorities based on their respective programs and organizations' needs.
- b. **Federal Updates**
- During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), temporary Medicare telehealth waivers went into effect allowing coverage flexibilities. Post-PHE, these waivers were extended through 12/31/24. There are currently several federal bills introduced to extend these waivers beyond their end-of-year expiration (or make them permanent). See bill summaries below:
 - [H.R. 8261 – Preserving Telehealth, Hospital and Ambulance Access Act](#)
 - Introduced 5/8/24 in the U.S. House
 - Bill aims to extend current temporary Medicare telehealth waivers for 2 years beyond 12/31/24 expiration.
 - Bill advanced through the Committee on Ways and Means on 5/7/24 and is now under review by the Committee on Energy and Commerce. The bill will need to be approved by both House and Senate.
 - The American Telemedicine Association submitted a letter of support.
 - [S. 3967 – Telehealth Modernization Act](#) and [H.R. 7623 – Telehealth Modernization Act of 2024](#)
 - Introduced 3/19/24 in the U.S. Senate (by SC Senator Tim Scott)
 - Introduced 5/16/24 in the U.S. House
 - Bill aims to make permanent a majority of the Medicare telehealth flexibilities implemented during the COVID-19 PHE.
 - [S. 2016 – CONNECT for Health Act of 2023](#)
 - As a reminder, this was re-introduced in 2023 and aims to make Medicare telehealth flexibilities permanent.
 - It is the most comprehensive bill of the three, as it aims to make **all** of the temporary flexibilities permanent. All three bills have bipartisan support, and we'll continue to track and update the Advisory Council and SCTA Sustainability Workgroup as they progress.
8. **Next SCTA Advisory Council Meeting**
- a. **Thursday, August 15th, 2024 from 1:00PM – 2:30PM, In-person**
- Location to be determined. Please reach out if your organization would like to host!