SOUTH CAROLINA
Telehealth
ALLIANCE

SCTA Advisory Council Meeting
Thursday, February 20th, 2025, 1:00 – 2:00 PM
Virtual – Microsoft Teams

Meeting Attendees:
Jimmy McElligott, Sonya Ebeling, Ragan Bishop, Kelsy Arellano (SCTA), Allie Dodd, Emily Warr (MUSC), Don Godish, Tabitha Safdi (SCETV), Elizabeth Harmon (SCHA), Kathy Schwarting (PCC), Ebony Legette, Bryon Frost (McLeod), Lisa Kopera, Sallie Carvalho, Carley Howard Draddy, Shauna Jones (Prisma), Kevin Bennett (SC CRPH), Sam Head (SC DHHS)

1. **Welcome, Introductions, and Wins**
   a. The SCTA welcomed its new Administrative Assistant, Kelsy Arellano to the team this month!
   b. Prisma Health and McLeod Health plan to go live with a new arm of their collaborative pediatric subspecialty telehealth program.

2. **SCTA Statewide Strategic Plan & Reports**
   a. CY24Q4 Report Highlights
   ▪ Advisory Council members took time during the meeting to share highlights from their SCTA CY24Q4 Report sections.
   ▪ This report will soon be available to view on the [SCTA Report Webpage](#).

   b. CY25 Strategic Plan
   ▪ The Advisory Council was presented with the finalized CY2025 SCTA Strategic Plan, collaboratively curated among SCTA partners at the end of 2024.
   ▪ As a reminder, the plan did not undergo significant changes from 2024, rather the language and metrics were tweaked and simplified to reflect the work of the SCTA partners and the utilization and site data being captured in the SCTA's data platform.
   ▪ As a baseline for the 2025 strategy metrics, the following 2024 statistics were presented:
     • Utilization of ambulatory care delivered virtually = **676,550+**
     • Utilization of hospital support telehealth programs = **112,910+**
     • Number and location of hospitals and free-standing emergency departments providing telehealth services = **73 (24 counties)**
     • Utilization of virtual urgent care = **87,280+**
     • Utilization of primary care support telehealth programs = **214,800+**
     • Number and location of schools providing telehealth services = **290 (31 counties)**
     • Maternal behavioral health telehealth interactions = **1,317 (patients reached)**

3. **SCTA Procedural Items**
   a. FY26 Budget
      - SCTA leadership presented the FY26 SCTA proposed budget:
        - Budget changes from FY25 to FY26 were minimal with slight fluctuations in operational costs, however, support of partnering organizations remains the same.
        - The continued spend down of funds and efforts toward program sustainability were emphasized.

   b. CY25 Operational Procedures
      - Advisory Council members will be provided with the CY2025 SCTA Advisory Council Operating Procedures for review and can provide any suggested edits.
      - No edits are anticipated from the SCTA administrative team besides updating the effective date.

4. **Broadband & Digital Literacy**
   a. PCC is preparing for its annual Federal Communications Commission (FCC) filing in April and continues to advocate for the continuation of the federal broadband subsidy program.
   b. Additionally, PCC continues to program digital literacy training to seniors and low-income individuals. They have completed their fourth class this year, held in Orangeburg County where there was over a 200-person waitlist for the program, with plans for training in Williamsburg County soon.
   c. The SCTA's digital literacy manager, Victoria Hamilton, has been attending PCC's digital literacy classes to become familiar with their process and to apply these lessons to help extend this support in our state.

5. **Legislative & Advocacy**
   a. Medicare Flexibility Contingency Plans
      - As a result of the 2025 Continuing Resolution, titled the American Relief Act 2025, signed into law in December 2024, Medicare telehealth pandemic flexibilities were **extended until March 31, 2025**.
      - While stakeholders are hopeful for another extension, it is not guaranteed. Current status:
        - Telehealth continues to receive bi-partisan support and is not the main issue at hand for the lack of a long-term extension.
        - Congress is working toward a budget for FY25, but negotiations have been difficult. If an agreement is not reached by March 14, 2025, it is possible an additional continuing resolution will be introduced to buy time, extending flexibilities including those surrounding telehealth. However, a government shutdown is possible if this does not happen, ending the Medicare flexibilities.

- MUSC's telehealth visit are operating per usual while the team works on a contingency plan in case flexibilities are to expire.
  - This consists of forecasting potential impacts (financial and appointment volumes) for non-behavioral health Medicare patients receiving telehealth at their home or a non-rural area.
  - Also developing process and timeline to:
    - 2-weeks prior to deadline: Stop scheduling new non-Behavioral health Medicare patients for virtual visits
    - 1-week prior to deadline: Convert scheduled virtual visits for non-BH Medicare patients to in-person
    - April 1 and on: Holding claims for non-BH Medicare patients for virtual visits should they be erroneously submitted
    - Patient and provider communication
  - If an extension is not introduced one week prior to the expiration, MUSC's operations will adjust according to its plan. More information regarding MUSC's plan can be made available to SCTA partners as a guide once finalized.
- Due to the urgency of the matter and timeline, the SCTA leadership team will begin providing stakeholders with weekly federal updates via email.

6. **Next SCTA Advisory Council Meeting**
   a. Thursday, May 22nd, 2025, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
      - If you would like to host the next Advisory Council meeting at your organization, please reach out to SCTA Manager, Ragan Bishop ragan@sctelehealth.org.