

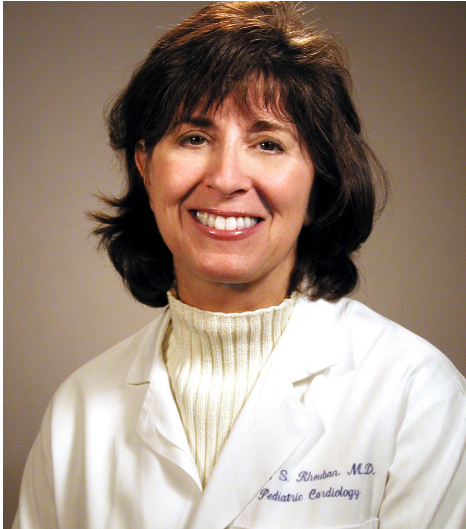
VIRGINIA TELEHEALTH NETWORK

2022 Annual Report



The Virginia Telehealth Network (VTN) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting telehealth efforts in the Commonwealth. Started in 2006 by a group of health providers with an interest in promoting telehealth, VTN seeks to provide education, resources, and best practices to users of telehealth while advocating for safe and effective delivery of telehealth services. In addition, VTN develops and maintains strong partnerships that allow for the exploration and promotion of innovative programs that promote access to high-quality health care via telehealth.

A letter from the VTN BOARD CHAIR



Karen S. Rheuban, M.D.
Chair, Virginia Telehealth Network

Dear Friends:

As we emerged as a nation from the depths of the public health emergency, we entered the 2022 calendar year full of uncertainty. Would life as we knew it in the realm of health care return to a sense of normalcy? Could we sustain the progress we have made in so many respects in the area of telehealth? In what ways could we continue telemedicine's momentum that began during the pandemic?

Now, as we reflect on the year behind us, there is much good news to report, largely due to the collective work of so many, the vision and commitment that fuel our efforts, and the extraordinary resiliency that the telehealth community demonstrated along the way.

The pages to follow chronicle many of the achievements of the past year, propelled in large part by the Virginia Telehealth Network. The organization continues to serve as an effective advocate for telehealth, helping ensure that policymakers are aligned with our goal of increasing access to a range of telehealth services, particularly for populations that are underserved.

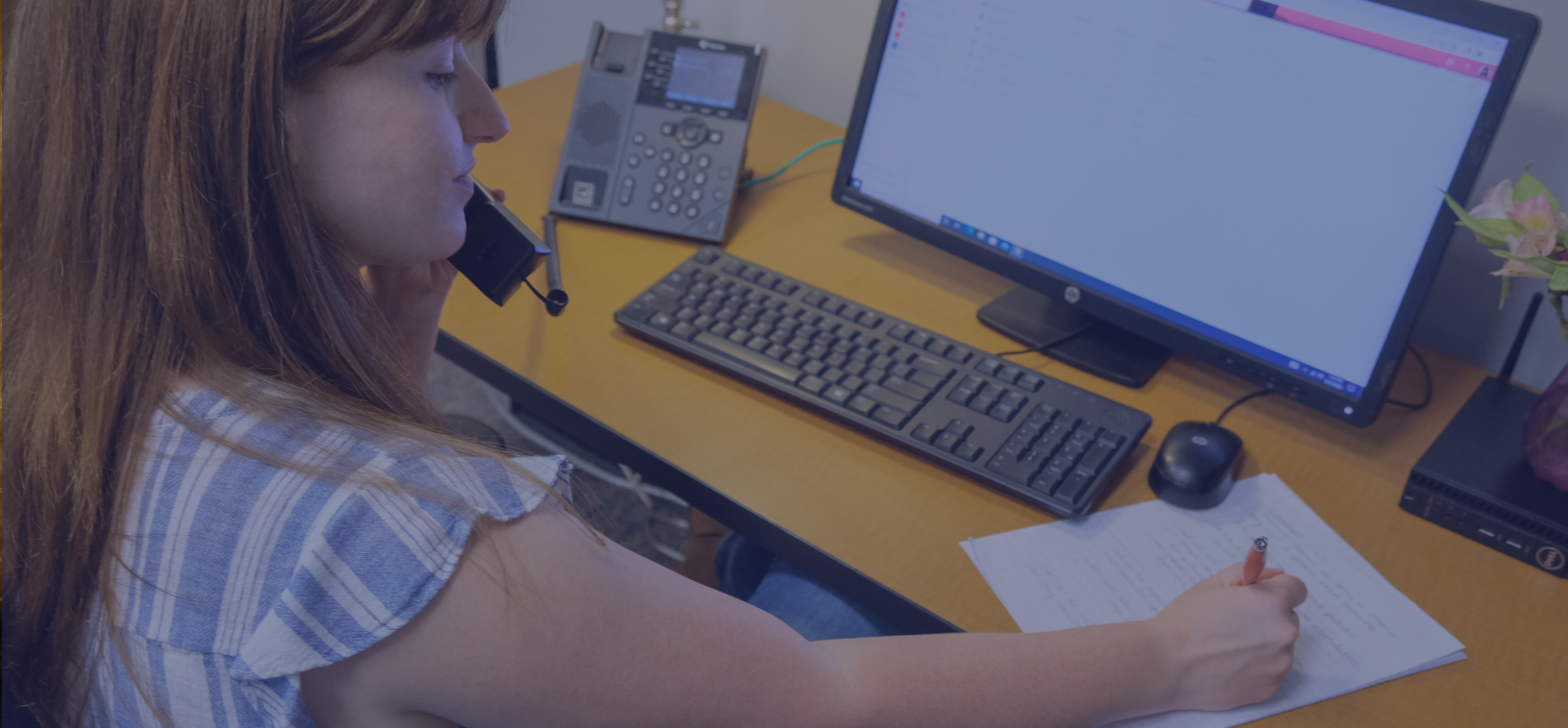
Toward that end, I'm particularly proud of two initiatives that you can read more about in this report. Our Equity & Telehealth series continues to showcase the ways in which providers, clinics, and health care institutions across the state are helping to expand the availability of health care via telemedicine. The year also saw the launch of an innovative pilot program designed to help deliver professional telemental health services to populations in Virginia who traditionally have been unable to afford them. We have high hopes for the Virginia Telemental Health Initiative.

Finally, no recap of the year can be complete without a large measure of gratitude to the many partners that have worked shoulder to shoulder in advancing the breadth of telehealth services across the Commonwealth. Health care providers from an array of practice areas, hospital systems, free and charitable clinics, government officials, and policymakers – all of whom demonstrated tremendous fealty to helping deliver telehealth into the homes of Virginians in every part of the state. During a year of uncertainty, their commitment and resiliency has helped maintain a steady cadence of progress toward making telehealth a viable and convenient option for everyone. To all of them, we are thankful.

The year ahead holds great promise, and we look forward to building on this foundation to erect a vibrant system of care delivered through telehealth.

Sincerely,

Karen S. Rheuban, M.D.
Chair, Virginia Telehealth Network



Advocacy Efforts

The 2022 legislative calendar included bills that impacted VTN's efforts to broaden access to telehealth and help even the playing field between in-person and virtual health care services, including:

- Requirement of the Board of Health to consult with VTN in developing and maintaining the State-wide Telehealth Plan.
- The Board of Health to amend the state plan for medical assistance services to include a provision for the payment of the originating site fee to emergency medical service agencies for facilitating synchronous telehealth visits with a distant site provider delivered to a Medicaid member.
- The Board of Medical Assistance Services to amend the state plan for medical assistance services to provide for the payment for remote patient monitoring services for certain conditions and provider-to-provider consultations available through the free-for-service program.

Additional budget items discussed during the 2022 legislative session included funding for a comprehensive study of the state and local behavioral health system and continued funding for a VTN pilot program.

Virginia's State Telehealth Plan

In 2020, the General Assembly passed legislation directing the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to create a statewide telehealth plan. Since then, VTN has been proud to serve on the planning committee that devised the initial plan, and we continue to work on its development through a foundational assessment that identifies gaps as well as a process for providing comprehensive updates.

This past year, the General Assembly appointed VTN as a direct consultant to VDH on the enhancement of the State Telehealth Plan. VTN is convening collaborative partners to review and update the plan in 2023 during their 2023 VTN Summit. Ongoing, VTN will track the implementation of the plan and lead efforts to launch a mapping system with WIM to develop a Virginia Telehealth locator tool.

Equity & Telehealth Initiative

Telehealth has become a vibrant and ever-growing part of Virginia's health care landscape, and VTN continues to showcase the diversity of this work through our Equity & Telehealth (E&T) series. Through blogs, interviews, research, a monthly e-newsletter, and other content, the E&T initiative shines a deserving spotlight on how health systems, practices, and individual providers are increasing access to care via telehealth. Much of the content focused on amplifying the varied and often innovative ways that stakeholders are leveraging the versatility of telehealth to reach populations that are medically underserved while addressing community needs. Content throughout the year also helped to educate others on how to harness the power of telehealth for their own needs and practices.

► Results

26
blog posts

58%
increase in web traffic from 2021

Increase
in attention to VTN initiatives



Benchmarking *Telehealth Usage in Virginia*

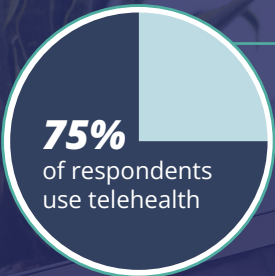
During 2021, VTN commissioned an IRB-approved, multipronged research effort on the “state of the state” of telehealth in the Commonwealth. The first-of-its-kind research effort surveyed more than 9,000 licensed health care providers across Virginia. This past year, VTN worked to develop a snapshot analysis of the findings as well as a follow-up survey. Charts, graphs, and data from these reports were used to inform legislative efforts and provide important context for a new statewide telemental health initiative and Equity & Telehealth initiative.

In order to keep up to date with the ever-evolving telehealth landscape – including how providers are using telehealth, community needs, best practices, and the like – VTN is launching a plan for an annual *Benchmarking Telehealth Usage in Virginia* survey.

The second annual survey kicked off in January 2023.



The initial 2021 research surveyed **9,257** active licensed health care professionals in Virginia.



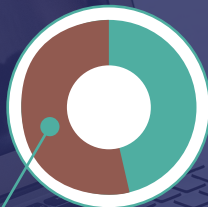
Why telehealth is *not* being used

1. Not compatible with specialty or practice (46%)
2. Not currently seeing patients (29%)
3. Lack of patient demand (16%)
4. Quality of care concerns (13%)
5. Patient limitations with access or comfort (13%)

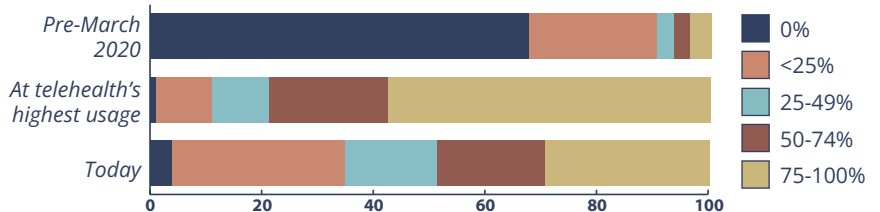


Only 5.5% of respondents said they wouldn't consider using telehealth in the future.

56.5% plan to increase their telehealth usage in the future



Percentage of Patient Encounters Provided By Telehealth



Virginia Telemental Health Initiative

Many months of visioning, collaboration, and preparation came to fruition in 2022 with the launch of the Virginia Telemental Health Initiative (VTMHI).

VTN worked with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), the Virginia



Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (VAFCC), and other stakeholders to develop the pioneering initiative designed to meet the mental health needs of Virginians. By partnering with participating free and charitable clinics across the Commonwealth, the program provides convenient online access to mental health services for those who are uninsured or underinsured. Services are provided by volunteer mental health providers in the process of meeting licensure requirements under the guidance of staffed VTMHI clinical supervisors. As part of an innovative model, providers are paired with participating free and charitable clinics.

VISION & RESEARCH

VTN's inaugural Benchmarking Telehealth Usage in Virginia survey helped lay the groundwork for VTMHI, and additional research to tap into the actual needs of Virginia's mental health providers and free and charitable clinics was conducted to inform the functionality and logistics of the program.

The results of that round of research – both qualitative and quantitative – included:

- Survey responses from **101** behavioral and mental health providers in Virginia
- Survey responses from **129** pre-license behavioral and mental health providers
- **6** focus groups with **25** potential supervisors and supervisees
- **8** informational interviews with potential free and charitable clinic partners

Much of the data collected during the research phase along with the overwhelming need for care and lack of services across Virginia ultimately fueled the concept for VTMHI.

THE PILOT TAKES SHAPE

VTN worked with VTMHI partners to select six initial free clinic participants, finalize logistics, plan for the launch of VTMHI, and establish a five-year plan.

WE HAVE LIFTOFF

VTMHI began seeing patients through Fauquier Free Clinic in December 2022 and will begin seeing patients through five additional participating clinics in the first quarter of 2023. A proactive media relations campaign helped to promote the pilot's launch, which resulted in news articles in media outlets across the state and a bylined op-ed by VTMHI supervisor Dr. Lakesha Roney that ran in The Richmond Times-Dispatch.

A LOOK AHEAD

By 2026, VTMHI will expand care through:

- **45** participating free and charitable clinics
- **110** volunteer providers
- **720** hours of education for free clinic providers and staff
- Over **40K** telemental health visits

A Guide to Best Practices

VTN developed a comprehensive Virginia Medicaid Telehealth Resource Guide to help Virginia's providers access the latest information regarding telehealth services and Virginia Medicaid MCO payor guidelines.

The full report includes:

- Links to the most current and up-to-date Virginia Medicaid resources
- Updates on terminology and modalities related to telehealth
- A table of Medicaid covered services and codes

VTN also assisted with the development of a comprehensive Kentucky Medicaid Telehealth Resource Guide for providers practicing in the neighboring state.





Virginia Telehealth Network, Inc. | PO Box 3412
North Chesterfield, VA 23235-7412

Mara Servaites, Executive Director
mara@ehealthvirginia.org

<https://www.ehealthvirginia.org/>