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POSTER: Creating and Piloting a Survey to Determine Readiness in Rural Populations in Ohio

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TELEHEALTH SURVEY FOR RURAL POPULATIONS IN OHIO

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ABSTRACT

In 2015, the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion allowed over 700,000 Ohioans to gain access to healthcare insurance, but having health insurance did not improve access to healthcare providers. In rural populations in Ohio, there are several counties in which less than five healthcare providers are available for the entire county with little or no specialists available for patients. People in rural areas of Ohio may have significant travel time and distance to see a provider which decreases preventative health visits.

Telehealth is the next big wave of technology and advancement for healthcare, but most rural populations in Ohio have no definition of telehealth and no experience with telehealth. This project addresses the need for a telehealth survey to determine readiness and provides results from a telehealth survey in rural Ohio. This project identifies three themes; a knowledge gap related to telehealth, infrastructure, and a desire for closer access to healthcare. By identifying readiness to telehealth, real solutions to benefit the rural populations in Ohio can begin.

This project concludes with recommendations for successful implementation of telehealth in a rural population in Ohio. Telehealth could be another dead-end road to healthcare if people are not educated on the advantages and implementation or if the local infrastructure is not sustainable for a telehealth program. People could be frightened of the technology or mistrustful if the healthcare provider is not face-to-face. Telehealth could be a successful road to access if people are given the knowledge and opportunity to participate in their healthcare decisions.

INTRODUCTION

All people have a right to quality care which is easily accessible and affordable. Ohio has 1,458,554 people living in health provider shortage areas (HPSA) (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2019). Health disparities have always existed in rural and underprivileged areas within the United States, where access to care and care coordination are severely lacking. The 2017 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report explains that the health disparities gap, while improving in some areas, overall is widening for the poor and uninsured (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018, p.1). People living in rural areas utilize urgent care centers and emergency rooms for routine care instead of traveling for primary care. Preventative care is key to reducing the spread of chronic disease. Nursing has deep roots in patient advocacy, access to healthcare, and preventative care as evidenced by Lillian Wald's Henry Street Settlement which began on the lower East Side of New York in an effort to reach the poor and disfranchised with gaining better health (Buhler-Wilkerson, 1993).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Rural people in Ohio Lack Access to Healthcare

PICO

How do rural people with lack of access to healthcare perceive telehealth?

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the perceptions of people who live in rural areas to the use of telehealth.
- To determine the barriers associated with utilizing telehealth among persons who live in rural areas.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Vinton County, Ohio is a healthcare desert
- There are no urgent care centers or emergency rooms in Vinton County, Ohio
- There are limited specialty care providers, such as cardiologists, pulmonologists, etc in rural Ohio
- Telehealth has been used by Veteran's Affairs (VA) since 2014 in rural areas and has been proven sustainable

Measure	Lack of Consistent Source of Primary Care	Primary Care Physicians
Description	% of adults without any regular doctor	Primary Care Physicians, rate (per 100, 0000 pop.)
Meigs County	30.3%	17.14
Jackson County	25.6%	45.8
Vinton County	31.8%	15.5
Ohio	18.7%	91.3

(Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019, p. 11)

PROBLEM STATEMENT & SIGNIFICANCE
Framework Appreciative Inquiry

1. Discovery
- Conducted meetings/phone calls with staff from Meigs, Jackson, and Vinton Health Departments
- Gave information about telehealth and its benefits to local health department staff
- Listened to suggestions from health department staff re: questions which might show readiness in rural populations
- For the telehealth surveyAsk questions re: what would be cultural and appropriate

2. Dream
- Met with local health department staff
- Discussed questions to see what was culturally appropriate
- Looked at characteristics & experiences to understand what questions should be used in survey
- Questioned assumptions of local health department

VINTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.

3. Design
- Created the telehealth survey on SmartSurvey software with informed consent in the online survey
- Created an online website for the telehealth survey
- Collected data directly into the SmartSurvey software
- Results were housed and analyzed directly in SmartSurvey
- Advertising consisted of a flyer which was posted in Meigs, Jackson, and Vinton Counties
- Provided advertising in two newspapers which covered all three counties

4. Destiny
- Analyzed data from 80 responses
- 3 themes identified, including
  -A knowledge gap related to telehealth
  -Infrastructure
  -A desire for increased access to healthcare
- Create an instructional program to educate residents about telehealth & its benefits
- Ensure cellular access is available
- Engage residents to try something new & out of the box

OUTCOMES & EVALUATION

80 respondents to the telehealth survey

3 themes identified within the survey to indicate readiness for telehealth in rural populations in Ohio
- A knowledge gap related to telehealth
- Infrastructure
- A desire for closer access to healthcare

These responses determine the population surveyed has a positive response to telehealth and would welcome more information of the benefits regarding telehealth.

What do you like about telehealth? (choose all you agree with)

Responses	Total	Percentages
Easy to use	13	81.25%
Didn't have to drive to far	11	68.75%
Would use again	9	56.25%

What are some barriers you have identified with telehealth use? (choose all you agree with)

Responses	Total	Percentages
Not a face-to-face visit with a doctor	8	50.00%
The doctor doesn't know me	12	75.00%

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The responses of the survey determine the rural population in Ohio is ready for telehealth. There are two recommendations for moving forward with a successful implementation of telehealth in rural populations in Ohio.

1. An educational program which focuses on the definition, advantages, and barriers of telehealth must be conducted for rural population residents and healthcare providers to encourage acceptance.
2. Engage rural populations in Ohio as a means to determine readiness of telehealth acceptance and usage to increase access to healthcare.

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