Rural Broadband Study Committee

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Access to Health Care and Broadband Infrastructure

- Access to health care is a key driver of economic development.
  - "Employers see the availability of good health care as an asset when they are deciding where to locate a new business or expand an existing facility." – 2015 UW Extension and WHA Report

- Affordable, fast, and reliable broadband is becoming increasingly connected to health care access in Wisconsin.

Access to Health Care and Broadband Infrastructure

1) Physician Recruitment and Retention (residential infrastructure)
   - Shortage of physicians, particularly in rural areas.
   - Physicians often trained in urban areas.
   - Lack of residential high-speed broadband is a recruiting and retention disadvantage for a community.

Access to Health Care and Broadband Infrastructure

2) Outlying rural clinics and telemedicine rely on broadband infrastructure to reduce distance based access to care barriers (commercial infrastructure)

- Higher percentage of rural residents in poverty
- Travel distance is a barrier to health care access and health.
- Medicaid pays transportation costs for its enrollees to see a health provider.

Access to Health Care and Broadband Infrastructure

2) Outlying rural clinics and telemedicine rely on broadband infrastructure to reduce distance based access to care barriers (commercial infrastructure)

- Outlying rural clinics EHRs dependent on broadband
  - EHRs have become more complex as health care delivery becomes more data dependent…
  - …which has resulted in remotely hosted EHRs…
  - …which requires robust high speed broadband.
  - Access to affordable high speed broadband key for sustainability of outlying clinics

Access to Health Care and Broadband Infrastructure

2) Outlying rural clinics and telemedicine rely on broadband infrastructure to reduce distance based access to care barriers (commercial infrastructure)

    – Telemedicine dependence on broadband

      • Telemedicine is being leveraged to provide access to specialists in rural clinics.

      • Broadband needs for telemedicine can be different than "regular" commercial broadband needs:

        – Equivalent upload speeds

        – Low latency (delay)

        – High reliability

      • Examples:

        – Teleradiology – transmission of detailed images on demand

        – Telepsychiatry – high definition video conferencing.

Access to Health Care and Broadband Infrastructure

3) Emerging E-visits and home health monitoring to reduce access barriers (residential infrastructure)

- – Reliable, affordable broadband will enable individuals to access care from home.
- – Accessing and managing care at home can remove substantial travel-related barriers to health among Medicaid enrollees and those in poverty.
- – **E-visits** – Range from A/V communications to interactive text-based diagnostic tools.
- – **Home health monitoring** – For chronic disease management, can help individual and clinician identify and manage conditions.

Recommendations

- Add **impact on medically underserved/Medicaid population** as an evaluation criteria for PSC grants.

- Incentivize creation of regular **Community Broadband Needs Assessments** that gather community stakeholder input to help guide local prioritization of broadband projects.

- Investigate the creation of a **publicly available street level map of broadband infrastructure** to help communities make more informed broadband infrastructure investments.

HSHS Participation in 2014 PSC Broadband Grant

- HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital (Eau Claire) and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital (Chippewa Falls) were partners in CCI Systems and Eau Claire County application in 2014.
- Also included:
  - CESA 10
  - Augusta, Fall Creek and Osseo-Fairchild School Districts
  - Chippewa Valley Inter Networking Consortium.

HSHS Participation in 2014 PSC Broadband Grant

- The successful proposal:
    - Created a fixed wireless project in east central Eau Claire County
    - Built one communications tower
    - Added equipment on additional existing towers
    - Added fiber to project
    - Provided broadband service to an unserved area in Eau Claire County
    - $139,497 grant awarded
    - $385,000 in-kind labor, equipment, and cash match from 8 organizations.

HSHS Participation in 2014 PSC Broadband Grant

How did HSHS participate in the grant application?

Why did HSHS participate in the grant application?

How did the grant benefit the community and health care?

As a stakeholder of a consortium-developed grant application, how could the grant program be improved?

Thank You!

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