

Image not found or type unknown

St. Croix Medical Facilities Among Recipients of FCC's \$42 Million Telehealth Funding Program

Health / **Published On August 28, 2021 04:48 AM /**

Staff Consortium **August 28, 2021**

Image not found or type unknown



The Juan F. Luis Hospital received \$345,566 to purchase telemedicine devices and virtual visit software to implement a full telehealth system to improve patient care. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

The Federal Communications Commission on Thursday approved an initial set of 62 applications for funding commitments totaling \$41.98 million for Round 2 of its Covid-19 Telehealth Program. Among the recipients were the Juan F. Luis Hospital, which received \$345,566 to purchase telemedicine devices and virtual visit software to implement a full telehealth system to improve patient care, and the Virgin Islands Healthcare Foundation, located in Christiansted, which was awarded \$416,002 to purchase remote patient monitoring systems to reduce in-person contact for providers and patients with chronic conditions who might contract Covid-19 from otherwise

routine hospital visits.

Health care providers in each state, territory, and the District of Columbia, including those previously unfunded in Round 1, will use this funding to provide telehealth services during the coronavirus pandemic, the FCC said. The FCC's Covid-19 Telehealth Program supports the efforts of health care providers to continue serving their patients by providing reimbursement for telecommunications services, information services, and connected devices necessary to enable telehealth during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a statement Friday, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett expressed gratitude to the FCC for the funding. "I want to thank the FCC for this infusion of \$345,566.00 to the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center Foundation to purchase telehealth devices and virtual visit software, as well as \$416,002.00 to the Virgin Islands Healthcare to purchase remote patient monitoring systems to reduce in-person contact for providers and patients with chronic conditions who might contract COVID-19 from otherwise routine hospital visits," she said.

FCC Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel spoke to the importance of telehealth during the Covid-19 pandemic. "During the Covid-19 pandemic, access to health care has proven to be not only a national issue, but also a local issue, and it is imperative that every community is given the tools to access this care as safely and effectively as possible," she said. "The FCC is committed to ensuring that every state and territory in the United States receive funding as part of this program. The FCC took action earlier this year to establish a system for rating applications in Round 2, factoring in the hardest hit and lowest-income areas, Tribal communities, and previously unfunded states and territories. Now even more doctors and nurses in every corner of our country can establish or expand telehealth services to support patients and their families."

According to the release, this first set of awards will go to applications that qualify for the equitable distribution step, as required by Congress and outlined in the FCC's rules, to ensure nationwide distribution of funding to health care providers in each state, territory, and the District of Columbia. This step funds the highest-scoring applications in every state, territory, and the District of Columbia plus the second highest-scoring application from the states and territories that did not receive funding in Round 1, if multiple applications were submitted from those areas.

Round 2 is a \$249.95 million federal initiative that builds on the \$200 million program established as part of the CARES Act. Now that funding has been committed to the highest-scoring applications from each state, territory, and the District of Columbia, the next funding awards will commit funding to the highest-scoring applications, regardless of geography, until at least \$150 million has been committed. The FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau will then announce an opportunity for all remaining applicants to supplement their applications, as required by Congress. After all remaining applicants have the opportunity to supplement, the remaining program funding will be committed.

Below is a list of health care providers that were approved for funding (alphabetically by state):

- Mobile County Health Department in Mobile, Alabama was awarded \$803,979 to purchase remote patient monitoring equipment and a telehealth software platform, focusing on patients with high blood pressure due to the increased risk of experiencing severe complications from COVID-19.

- The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium in Juneau, Alaska was awarded \$804,092 for equipment, including telemedicine carts, web services, tablets and videoconferencing software, to create a telehealth program that will provide care to communities spanning an archipelago of more than 375 islands, many accessible only by plane or boat, and will maximize patient access while minimizing in-person contact and risk of virus transmission.
- Norton Sound Health Corporation in Nome, Alaska was awarded \$416,250 for home health care kits and mobile devices to provide enhanced remote care management to address the barriers of providing health care services to patients remotely.
- LBJ Tropical Medical Center in Pago Pago, American Samoa was awarded \$334,519 for telehealth equipment to facilitate consultations and remote ultrasound sessions with OB/GYN specialists as well as follow-up visits with patients unable to visit in-person due to COVID-19.
- The Tafuna Family Health Center in Tafuna, American Samoa was awarded \$187,297 for telehealth equipment to provide contactless primary, dental, women's health, pharmacy, and pediatric care.
- Tuba City Regional Health Care in Tuba City, Arizona was awarded \$266,946 to purchase internet service, a mobile telehealth clinic, telemedicine carts, and cell phones to bring health care to and connect patients from the Navajo Nation in remote locations – who may lack access to transportation, internet connectivity, or phone service – with primary care and specialty providers.
- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, Arkansas was awarded \$982,589 to purchase telemedicine carts for emergency departments, labor and delivery units, and clinical spaces at a range of rural, medically underserved health care facilities that will be essential for secure, real-time communication with providers to triage, diagnose, and provide treatment recommendations for hospitals in rural and underserved communities in Arkansas.
- The Los Angeles Jewish Home for the Aging in Reseda, California was awarded \$862,906 to purchase telehealth carts, WiFi extenders/mesh networks, and tablets to enable the provision of telehealth services to underserved and under-connected communities across the state in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Peak Vista Community Health Centers, a Federally Qualified Health Center operating 28 facilities in rural and urban areas in and around Colorado Springs, Colorado was awarded \$999,565 for devices to provide medical and behavioral health care via telemedicine to patients who may face significant barriers to care, including lack of health insurance, transportation, or housing.
- Community Health Center, Inc. in Middletown, Connecticut was awarded \$999,023 to purchase laptops, monitors, and other equipment to enable health care providers to communicate with patients and provide telehealth services throughout the state and nationwide.
- La Red Health Center in Georgetown, Delaware was awarded \$287,765 to purchase tablets and data plans, Bluetooth-enabled self-measured blood pressure devices, Bluetooth-enabled glucometer starter kits, Bluetooth-enabled weight scales, an automated texting service, and a monthly cell service.
- The Elaine Ellis Center of Health in Washington, D.C. was awarded \$332,124 to acquire telehealth carts and secure servers to provide comprehensive telehealth services including primary, prenatal, mental health, urgent dental, and chronic care.
- MCR Health, Inc. in Palmetto, Florida, was awarded \$1,000,000 to purchase laptops, microphones, cameras, monitors, smart TVs, and telehealth carts/kiosks to enhance the provision of telehealth services during the pandemic, particularly so they can screen, triage,

manage, and monitor patients with COVID-19 symptoms remotely, thereby limiting the risk of spread to other patients and health care workers.

- The Georgia Primary Care Association, a consortium of Federally Qualified Health Centers throughout Georgia, was awarded \$998,514 for remote patient monitoring devices to help track and provide greater visibility into patient health that will help clinical staff quickly identify conditions or changes and support clinicians in providing quality health care.
- The Guam Memorial Hospital Authority in Tamuning, Guam was awarded \$722,000 for connected devices and internet services to facilitate and streamline the continuous care of COVID-19 patients, as well as follow-up care for outpatient services.
- Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii was awarded \$924,603 for the purchase and installation of clinic-to-clinic telemedicine equipment, as well as to upgrade its COVID-19 hotline to a virtual urgent care telehealth platform during the current pandemic.
- The University of Hawaii Maternal Telehealth Network for Maternal Fetal Medicine in Honolulu, Hawaii was awarded \$899,106 for internet connectivity and video conferencing services as well as electronic fetal monitoring devices and interfaces to allow for remote, essential women's and prenatal care.
- St. Luke's Health System in Boise, Idaho was awarded \$699,815 to build a secure virtual 2-way audio/video communication platform to remotely monitor and care for patients following discharge. This funding will help St. Luke's Health System add ICU beds in non-traditional units and attempt to prevent additional hospitalizations through continued routine care delivered virtually.
- Mercy Health System in Rockford, Illinois was awarded \$1,000,000 to purchase devices that will enable audio/video interaction between providers and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic and will allow patient populations to overcome traditional barriers to care, such as transportation challenges, remote locations, and a limited quantity of health care providers.
- HealthLinc Valparaiso in Valparaiso, Indiana was awarded \$362,696 to purchase devices that will enable remote monitoring of COVID-19 patients under quarantine, with a particular focus on patients with chronic illnesses.
- Shenandoah Medical Center in Shenandoah, Iowa, representing four Critical Access Hospitals in Iowa, was awarded \$946,100 to purchase remote patient monitoring devices such as connected pulse oximeters and blood pressure cuffs to more closely care for vulnerable high-risk patients with the aim of increasing early detection of health conditions and preventing unnecessary hospitalizations.
- Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas, Inc. in Pittsburg, Kansas was awarded \$366,167 to purchase Bluetooth-enabled medical devices including blood pressure cuffs, scales, and glucometers, and well as connected tablets for remote patient monitoring.
- Dayspring Health in Williamsburg, Kentucky was awarded \$455,420 to purchase telehealth equipment, including tablets, cameras, and probes for use by providers to enable seamless care and communication with patients. This technology will support enhanced virtual meetings to benefit patients that are home-bound or living in rural and remote communities.
- Baton Rouge Medical Center – Bluebonnet Campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana was awarded \$377,439 for tablets and telehealth platform licenses to provide telehealth services to patients.
- Alford Center for Health in Augusta, Maine was awarded \$603,315 to equip providers with all-in-one workstations capable of video conferencing and remote patient monitoring devices to perform virtual visits and reduce exposure.
- University of Maryland, Baltimore in Baltimore, Maryland was awarded \$977,066 for the purchase of laptops, internet services, mobile telehealth carts, equipment for vaccine outreach, and vaccine hotline and remote patient monitoring equipment to provide

telehealth care during the pandemic.

- St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford, Massachusetts, as part of Southcoast Health System, was awarded \$1,000,000 for laptops, mobile devices, and remote patient monitoring equipment to expand the hospital's telehealth capabilities and provide quality care services to patients at home.
- Sparrow Health System in Lansing, Michigan was awarded \$586,375 to purchase telehealth equipment for five hospitals, primarily located in rural, low-income areas, to expand patient access to, and improve timeliness of, care.
- Essentia Health in Duluth, an integrated health system in Minnesota, serving patients in the upper Midwest, was awarded \$981,204 to support the acquisition of remote monitoring devices and video carts with peripheral cameras and stethoscopes/EKGs for care during the pandemic, and to increase wireless broadband coverage at eight clinics to allow for additional space for telehealth patients.
- Magnolia Regional Health Center in Corinth, Mississippi was awarded \$471,885 for internet-based medical monitoring equipment to provide a greater range of services to patients, including urgent care telehealth visits and telemedicine for outpatient care to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- SSM Health in St. Louis, Missouri was awarded \$914,400 to expand its remote patient monitoring system pilot program by purchasing software, hardware, and connected devices that will increase the quality of patient care while promoting social distancing and improving health outcomes for patients.
- University of Montana College of Health in Missoula, Montana was awarded \$679,441 in order to purchase telemedicine kits to enable critical, remote telehealth services and to provide internet connected devices for remote patient monitoring services during the pandemic for underserved, rural, and Tribal populations within the state.
- The Bighorn Valley Health Center, Inc. in Hardin, Montana was awarded \$930,000 for remote patient monitoring equipment, mobile devices, cellular data plans, and monitoring platform services to provide remote care and monitoring to patients.
- Nebraska Urban Indian Health Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska was awarded \$190,875 for COVID-19 response kits, tablets, broadband services, and connected devices to ensure patients, including Tribal communities, have access to telehealth services and care during the pandemic.
- Nevada Health Centers, a Community Health Center providing health care services throughout the state, in Las Vegas, Nevada was awarded \$995,087 to secure telehealth carts, peripherals, and virtual conferencing equipment, as well as provider training required to facilitate secure health care to patients in urban, rural, and frontier communities.
- Harbor Care Health and Wellness Center in Nashua, New Hampshire was awarded \$801,768 to obtain computers and telecommunications devices, as well as improvements to their network and network security to provide enhanced telehealth services to patients, 75% of whom self-identified as homeless.
- Neighborhood Health Services Corporation in Plainfield, New Jersey was awarded \$491,308 to purchase remote patient monitoring devices that are Bluetooth enabled to allow secure and timely transfer of vital data directly into patients' records to enhance safe, telehealth patient care during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Presbyterian Medical Services in Santa Fe, New Mexico, as part of a system of 51 community health centers, was awarded \$357,725 to purchase software that will help to provide secure, confidential remote medical consultations, which will expand access to health care and improve the quality of health, especially for those living in rural areas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- United Health Services, a health care system serving South Central New York, was awarded \$562,116 for telemedicine carts and patient monitoring devices to provide telehealth services to patients at home, many of whom are located within high-poverty, rural, and underserved areas.
- Cape Fear Valley Health System, which serves rural and remote communities in Southeastern North Carolina, was awarded \$998,357 to deploy during the pandemic telemedicine carts and devices to enable secure, remote patient visits and consultations, as well as access to specialists and providers across the health system.
- McKenzie County Healthcare Systems, Inc. in Watford City, North Dakota was awarded \$194,267 for telehealth equipment and internet connectivity to provide telehealth services to patients, including outpatient follow-up care for COVID-19 patients.
- Commonwealth Health Center in Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands was awarded \$522,722 for telehealth devices to expand outpatient telemedicine services, particularly for patients living on the more rural islands who would otherwise require air travel to access care, putting them at increased risk of contracting COVID-19.
- Mercy Health in Cincinnati, Ohio was awarded \$812,876 for telehealth equipment to ensure continuity of care for patients, while reducing the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread, as well as to provide an on-demand virtual care platform with video functionality that enables remote access to a health care provider.
- INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma was awarded \$998,854 to purchase connected digital devices that will enable care focused on specific vulnerable populations that have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as high-risk Medicaid and Medicare patients in Oklahoma City metro areas and rural communities.
- La Clinica del Valle Family Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center, in Medford, Oregon was awarded \$123,792 for laptops, mobile devices, and a telehealth platform, to provide synchronous, connected health services to patients, while targeting low-income, uninsured, and/or Spanish-speaking patients at its neighborhood health centers and mobile health center.
- Allegheny Health Network in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was awarded \$999,910 to acquire, deploy, and support telehealth connected devices such as tablets and video platform hardware to enable video visits with patients in medically underserved communities that have been particularly vulnerable during the pandemic.
- The Med Centro Healthcare System in Ponce, Puerto Rico was awarded \$909,391 to acquire network improvements and connected devices, such as laptops and tablets, to implement a telehealth program to provide continuous care to patients during the pandemic whose incomes are primarily below the federal poverty level.
- Centro de Salud Integral en Naranjito in Naranjito, Puerto Rico was awarded \$869,990 to purchase devices to conduct telehealth visits to care for patients, including those in the isolated central mountainous region of Puerto Rico, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- East Bay Family Health Center in Newport, Rhode Island was awarded \$164,950 to purchase connected glucose meters and a mobile software platform to enhance the connection and interaction between providers and patients regardless of their location during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- St. Francis Hospital in Greenville, South Carolina was awarded \$853,062 for telehealth devices that can support interactions between hospitalized patients or long-term care residents and their care teams and family members for conferences and pastoral care, and for remote monitoring devices to manage care for high-risk patients.
- Sanford Health in Sioux Falls, South Dakota was awarded \$967,438 to secure internal connectivity wireless access points and associated network security to conduct confidential

telehealth appointments during the pandemic at several Critical Access Hospitals in medically underserved and rural areas.

- Mountain States Health Alliance in Johnson City, Tennessee was awarded \$994,354 for telemedicine equipment to allow providers to monitor patients with COVID-19 at home as well as around-the-clock monitoring of hospitalized patients while decreasing the risk of COVID-19 exposure.
- El Centro de Corazón, Magnolia Health Center in Houston, Texas was awarded \$999,880 to purchase laptops and web conferencing devices to help clinicians provide connected care, and to purchase remote patient monitoring devices and cell phones with data plans to enable patients to stay connected with their providers from the safety of their homes.
- Gunnison Valley Hospital in Gunnison, Utah was awarded \$275,850 for connected devices to support expanded telehealth services offered to patients in six counties the hospital serves, as well as in-hospital patients.
- The University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington, Vermont was awarded \$606,997 for telehealth equipment to help support remote patient engagement and monitoring for individuals with COVID-19, as well as increased access to contactless care for high-risk individuals.
- Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital in Roanoke, Virginia was awarded \$933,385 to purchase remote monitoring equipment for patient care during the pandemic.
- The Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center in Christiansted, St. Croix, in the U.S. Virgin Islands was awarded \$345,566 to purchase telemedicine devices and virtual visit software to implement a full telehealth system to improve patient care.
- The Virgin Islands Healthcare Foundation in Christiansted, St. Croix, in the U.S. Virgin Islands was awarded \$416,002 to purchase remote patient monitoring systems to reduce in-person contact for providers and patients with chronic conditions who might contract COVID-19 from otherwise routine hospital visits.
- NEW Health Programs Association in Chewelah, Washington was awarded \$485,047 to purchase remote patient monitoring devices and web cameras to provide web-based telehealth visits for patients who have been identified as potential positives or positives for COVID-19 in an area that serves rural patients where transportation is often a barrier to care.
- Cabin Creek Health Systems in Charleston, West Virginia was awarded \$304,521 to purchase laptops, network software and equipment, security software, and a voice service platform to bolster their internet and voice services to create a more efficient, secure and stable connected care program for patients and providers.
- Bellin Memorial Hospital, Inc. in Green Bay, Wisconsin was awarded \$682,016 to purchase tablets, remote patient care devices and software, telemedicine carts, and remote patient ophthalmological devices and software to deliver remote care to patients in rural areas and promote social distancing within healthcare facilities.
- American Telemedicine Connect Consortium, a consortium of health care providers throughout Wyoming, was awarded \$949,592 to purchase blood glucose monitoring kits, connected scales, blood pressure cuffs, and SIM cards for mobile medical devices to enhance the delivery of telemedicine during the pandemic.

For additional information on the FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth program, visit:

<https://www.usac.org/about/covid-19-telehealth-program/>.

