

Communication Network Development to Address Health and Human Services

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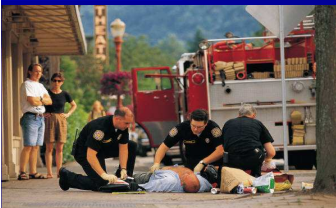
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A Roundtable: Community-Based Initiatives in an Era of Globalization

Problem Statement



- Greatest underserved (difficulty)
 - Working poor
 - Pregnant women
 - Children
 - Elderly
- Most disadvantaged
 - Rural areas
 - Lack of resources
 - Poorer health



Problem statement (cont.)

- In rural areas many organizations are not able to provide the needed services, and if the services are available, people are not always aware of what is available.
- In a focus group conducted by Green and his colleagues (2003), “... participants pointed out that many people are not aware of the programs and activities that do exist” (p. 6).

Who is involved?

- Key Stakeholders:
 - Government
 - Healthcare and human service providers
 - Insurance Providers
 - Citizens (Double role)
 - Tax payers
 - Service seekers



What is involved in access?

- Availability of funds
- Insurance coverage
- Costs of pharmaceuticals
- Lack of professional healthcare staff
- Administrative involvement
- Consumer/Patient participation



What is involved in access (cont.)?



- Economics
- Geography
- Transportation
- Prejudice
- Language
- Cultural differences



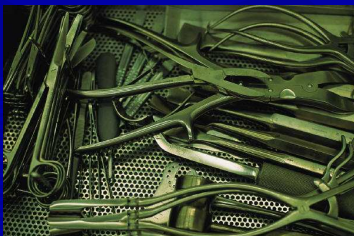
(The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, 1998, p. 4).

MS Delta: How does it relate?

- Main areas of concern:
 - Transportation
 - Affordable services
 - Specialty care
 - Lack of medical professional staff



Mississippi Health Assessment Program & Sisters of Mercy Health System (2003) needs assessment



Networking ... Why do it?

- Networking is posed as a partial solution to addressing shortages of health and human services providers.
 - This allows for increased and improved access by connecting health and human service providers together to better coordinate services
 - Researchers argue that through the use of telehealth/telemedicine services, many people are able to be served who would not otherwise have access to healthcare and human services.

(Pinkett, 2003)



Networking ... Why do it? (cont.)

- Primary recommendations to be taken into consideration for improving the health system in the Delta include:
 1. “More extensive networking, information sharing and collaborative projects should be pursued between existing organizations”
 2. “The use of community technology to facilitate greater interaction between service providers and clients/patients”

(Green, et al., 2003, p. 8)

What is telemedicine?

- According to the Office of Rural Health Policy (2000), Telemedicine is defined “...as the use of telecommunications for medical diagnosis and patient care, including patient counseling and clinical training of residents and health professions students when such training is a by product of direct patient care”

(Stewart, 2000, p. 71).

What is telemedicine (cont.)?

- Introduced over forty years ago
- 1959 - 1st documented use of interactive video for patient care
 - University of Nebraska for group psychiatric consultation
- 1975 – 15 projects in U.S.
- 1990-2004 – 736 projects

What is telemedicine (cont.)?



- Telemedicine is the:
 - Use of the web to interact with physicians in other areas without leaving your local area.
 - Tools: computer with modem, telephone line, and inexpensive video camera.
 - Allow for patient record review, tests, and diagnosis

Challenges ...

- Funding (very costly)
 - Payroll
 - On-going funding
- Lack of infrastructure
 - Broadband technology required
 - Lack of knowledgeable staff
- Doctors are reluctant
- Lack of personnel



Important Note

- It is important to note that this is only a small part of an ongoing effort to improve healthcare and human services.
- Networking attempts to assist in community development to provide better services to individuals seeking services within communities.