The Telehealth Resource Centers (TRCs) provide expert, customized, unbiased, and nonpartisan telehealth technical assistance across the country to health care organizations, health care networks, and health care providers with a special focus in assisting community health centers, such as federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and rural health centers (RHCs). The TRCs help these entities with implementation of cost-effective telehealth programs to serve rural and medically underserved areas and populations. TRCs focus on training, education, research, and consultation that is bolstered by their specific expertise and knowledge. There are 14 TRCs: 12 regional TRCs (RTRCs) and 2 national TRCs, one on policy (NTRC-P) and one focused on technology (NTRC-T) who all work collaboratively together, avoiding duplication, waste, and confusion to spend their funding in an effective and efficient manner.

The TRCs have found themselves facing increasing demands for their services as the telehealth industry continues to explode. In recent years, interest in utilizing telehealth to treat substance use disorders, particularly in heavily impacted rural areas, have significantly increased, particularly in FQHC/RHC settings. The TRCs unique skills, experience, and knowledge have provided bespoke services and resources that have proliferated the utilization of telehealth to address the needs of some of the nation’s most vulnerable populations. As telehealth grows at a rapid pace, TRCs are positioned to assist both veterans and novices in the field that are working to provide needed services to communities. TRCs will continue to help providers find viable solutions that allow these populations to access care through the use of telehealth.
INCREASED DEMAND ON THE TRCS

A sampling from 8 of the 14 TRCs show a significant increase in demand for their unique services and expertise. A comparison of technical assistance (TA) requests from the September 2017 – February 2018 period to the September 2018 – February 2019 period showed an increase of 63% in requests.

Additionally, over the years, the TA requests have become more complicated and involved as policies and changes are implemented and more sectors begin to utilize telehealth. Often, there is extensive back and forth between the TRC and the inquirer. Across the sampled TRCs, the average to complete an extensive TA request is 16 hours with the longest TA interaction being 60 hours that stretched over two and a half months.

The number of subject matters that the TRCs must respond to have expanded greatly to include expertise in a variety of areas that is rarely seen in other programs. Queries have ranged from reimbursement in Medicare and Medicaid, to legal and regulatory issues, technology, specialty care such as mental/behavioral health, and substance use disorder. TRCs are also experts on technical matters such as billing, training, professional development, curriculum development, workflow, etc.

Contact Your TRC

California Telehealth Resource Center
(877) 590-8164
http://www.caltrc.org

Great Plains Telehealth Resource and Assistance Center
(888) 239-7092
http://www.gptrac.org

Heartland Telehealth Resource Center
(877) 643-4872
http://www.heartlandtrc.org

Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center
(434) 906-4960
http://www.matrc.org

Northeast Telehealth Resource Center
(800) 379-2021
http://www.netrc.org

Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center
(833) 747-0643
http://www.nrtrc.org

Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center
(808) 556-2897
http://www.pbtrc.org

South Central Telehealth Resource Center
(855) 664-3450
http://www.learntelehealth.org

South East Telehealth Resource Center
(888) 738-7210
http://www.setrc.us

Southwest Telehealth Resource Center
(877) 535-6166
https://southwesttrc.org/

Southwest Telehealth Resource Center
(877) 391-0487
http://texlatrc.org

Upper Midwest Telehealth Resource Center
(855) 283-3734
http://www.umtrc.org

Center for Connected Health Policy
(877) 707-7172
http://www.cchpca.org

Telehealth Technology Assessment Resource Center
(844) 242-0075
http://www.telehealthtechnology.org

Conclusion

The TRCs provide rich and unbiased assistance and education that has facilitated the access and provision of health services for Americans. The TRCs continue to be a unique and invaluable resource that will help America's health system transition fully into a new era.

The National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers (NCTRC) is an affiliation of the 14 Telehealth Resource Centers funded individually through cooperative agreements from the Health Resources & Services Administration, Office for the Advancement of Telehealth. The goal of the NCTRC is to increase the consistency, efficiency, and impact of federally funded telehealth technical assistance services. This was made possible by 14 Telehealth Resource Centers and administered through grant #G22RH30365 from the Office for the Advancement of Telehealth, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.