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# SCTA Quarterly Report

## CY23 Quarter 1

Progress Achieved on the CY2023 Strategic Plan  
January - March 2023

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## South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA)

### CY2023 Q1 Report

### Executive Summary

The first quarter of calendar year 2023, (quarter 1, January 1 – March 31) was productive for the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA), as partners began their work toward achieving CY23 telehealth strategic tactics, outlined in the [CY23 SCTA Statewide Strategic Plan](#). With the completion of the [2022 SCTA Annual Report](#) during the quarter, SCTA partners had the opportunity to reflect on their telehealth advancements during CY2022 and showcase their many accomplishments. The “2022 Year In Review” page which includes highlights from the 2022 SCTA Annual Report is now live on the [SCTA website](#).

Telehealth advocacy in South Carolina remained a priority for SCTA leaders during Q1. In partnership with the SC Medical Association and SC Hospital Association, [House Bill 4159: Telehealth and Telemedicine Modernization Act](#) was introduced on March 15, 2023. The SCTA team looks forward to working alongside SC legislators and various SCTA stakeholders with hopes to advance and pass bill H. 4159 through the House prior to the end of the current legislative session.

The following report provides additional details on the above accomplishments and others from **CY23Q1**.

# SOUTH CAROLINA Telehealth ALLIANCE

South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA)  
CY23Q1 Report

## **SCTA Statewide Strategy**

During CY23Q1, SCTA partners began fulfilling their telehealth strategic tactics found within the [CY23 SCTA Statewide Strategic Plan](#). Partners will continue to report on their tactical efforts quarterly throughout the year to ensure advancement of the statewide collaborative strategy.

## **Sustainability and Reimbursement Advocacy**

The SCTA, alongside the SC Medical Association and SC Hospital Association, was thrilled to introduce telehealth language during the 2023 SC legislative session. [House Bill 4159: Telehealth and Telemedicine Modernization Act](#) was introduced on March 15, 2023 outlining the following goals:

1. **Introduce a new definition of “telehealth”** which includes all provider types, not only MDs and DOs, who are essential to a patient’s care team in providing increased access to healthcare.
2. **Modernize telehealth prescribing language** to ensure SC patients can access life-saving treatment to combat the opioid epidemic in our state, while maintaining important safeguards. Prescriptions of Schedule II and III narcotics are not permitted when a physician-patient relationship established solely via telemedicine except when/for:
  - Patient is in hospital being treated by a practitioner
  - When buprenorphine is prescribed for opioid use disorder
  - End of life care, and
  - Other exceptions authorized by the board

With support from several SC organizations and stakeholders, the SCTA team is hopeful to advance bill H. 4159 through the SC House prior to the end of the 2023 SC legislative session and proceed with advancement through the SC Senate during the 2024 session. The bill’s goals outline much-needed improvements to the SC telehealth landscape, however, work still remains to ensure equitable and sustainable coverage and payment for telehealth services. The SCTA will continue to work with the appropriate stakeholders to build on the legislature’s long commitment to telehealth and ensure its sustainability into the future.

## **SCTA Supported Technologies and Platforms**

The SCTA’s premium instance of Doxy.Me, a HIPAA compliant telehealth platform, remained a free offering to SC providers during the quarter. Active provider accounts on the instance increased to 1,400 during Q1, totaling nearly 11,000 visits. The SCTA aims to continue this offering for the foreseeable future, given the demonstrated ongoing satisfaction and usage from providers, particularly those in smaller rural or community health center settings. SC providers are encouraged to utilize the [Doxy.Me resource page](#) on the SCTA website to access account request instructions and to view frequently asked questions.

**Medical University of South Carolina**  
Telehealth Service Updates and Progress  
January – March 2023

**Service Extension**

A strong start to CY2023, MUSC's service extension team introduced a new, innovative service called Virtual Specialty. Virtual Specialty is a completely virtual service with tiered care providers that allows patients to access care quickly, as soon as one day. The first two specialties to go live with the service, endocrinology and rheumatology, were targeted due to long wait times for in-person appointments across the state.

During Q1, the service extension team also assisted MUSC's Regional Telehealth Clinics in obtaining a new service, movement disorders/neurology. The team looks forward to staffing this service with two new advanced practice providers in the coming quarters.

Upon completion of the Charleston market conversion to a new ambulatory video platform, the service extension team utilized time during Q1 to plan, prepare, and conduct a two-month-long process improvement project to enhance provider and patient experiences. The team looks forward to CY23Q2 with plans to implement identified enhancements and expand the platform to MUSC's Regional Health Network.

**Hospital Support**

January was an exciting start to CY23Q1 with the grand opening of MUSC Black River Hospital in Williamsburg County. With ongoing efforts to extend hospital services to vulnerable portions of SC, MUSC's hospital telehealth team implemented several services at this rural location including a daily rounding tele-hospitalist program, acute tele-stroke, scheduled tele-neurology, tele-infectious disease, and tele-psychiatry.

Progress during the quarter did not stop there, tele-psychiatry was expanded to Hilton Head Hospital, and collaboration took place with MUSC Kershaw to streamline tele-neurology consultation scheduling. These efforts demonstrate the dedication of MUSC's hospital telehealth support team to ensure patients receive care at their local community hospitals.

**Convenient Care**

MUSC's virtual urgent care (VUC) program remained strong during the first quarter of CY2023, with over 14,770 patient visits completed. Continuing to offer accessible quality care to college campuses, the VUC team conducted over 1,300 consults with students throughout the quarter. As CY2023 progresses, the MUSC VUC team will continue to explore future partnerships to increase access to care in the underserved regions of the state. Furthermore, strategic planning is underway to improve and expand VUC offerings with the goal of decreasing wait times in clinics, and tracking low-acuity illnesses to provide the best care possible.

**Primary Care Support**

MUSC was thrilled to hire a licensed social worker during Q1 to help implement a new telehealth collaborative care model. The model aims to enhance the value of existing primary care services by offering integrated tele-psychiatry support. With efforts to bridge the gaps in mental health care, MUSC is also in the process of partnering with a telehealth company to leverage a supporting app and web-based software. With the addition of a newly hired licensed social worker and new innovative software, patients can receive weekly check-ins and view the progress of their care plans. The team looks forward to Q2 to begin this initiative with pilots across the state.

Additionally during the quarter, MUSC's outpatient teleconsultation nutrition service began a new pilot collaborative care nutrition program. This offering will allow primary care providers to refer patients who have high body mass index (BMI) metrics to the program where they will receive a consultation, and undergo ongoing treatment and diet plan based on collaboration between MUSC's nutrition providers and the patient's primary care provider.

### **Health Equity**

During CY23Q1, MUSC's school-based health program welcomed a new bilingual physician assistant. While primarily stationed at a North Charleston Elementary School, the provider will see patients in schools across SC via telehealth to increase access for vulnerable populations and reduce health disparities. The school-based team is also diligently working through a DLT grant to expand care via telehealth to new school districts in underserved regions of the state. Moving into CY23Q2, the school-based telehealth team plans to continue its work with individual schools in SC to increase telehealth program enrollment and optimize scheduling for student visits.

Also during the quarter, MUSC completed the first iteration of a customized telehealth portal for a statewide school-based behavioral health initiative. The advancement of this initiative stems from continued collaborative planning meetings with representatives from the MUSC Psychiatry Department, Boeing Child Wellness Team, and the USC John Magill School Mental Health Certificate Program. To further progress in Q1, school district representatives from the lowcountry reviewed a drafted workflow of the project, as well as product content. Collaborators involved with this much-needed initiative look forward to CY23Q2 with plans to begin platform testing, with the ultimate goal of implementation for the upcoming school year.

# McLeod Health

## The Choice for Medical Excellence

### McLeod Health Telehealth Service Updates and Progress January - March 2023

#### Service Extension Programs

##### Forensic Nurse Examiner Program:

McLeod Health has established a Forensic Nurse Examiner Program that serves some of our most vulnerable patients. This program provides comprehensive care to victims of violence. South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) released its Crime in South Carolina Annual Report for 2021 on November 10, 2022. In 2021, there were 2,515 sexual battery and 21,580 aggravated assault cases reported. The clinical team includes nurses with SANE certification (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner). This team conducts a medical forensic exam, including evaluation for evidence collection; providing effective courtroom testimony; and showing compassion and sensitivity towards survivors of violence. The program utilizes Secure Digital Forensic Imaging Telemedicine technology that is encrypted and shared asynchronously with Law Enforcement.

#### Hospital Support Programs

##### Inpatient TelePsychiatry Consultations:

The McLeod Health TelePsychiatry Program is continuing to expand. Hospital patients can face a wide range of mental health issues. There is a national shortage of psychiatrists in America. This disparity can more profoundly impact rural communities. The McLeod Health TelePsychiatry Program provides easy accessibility, ensuring continuity of care and higher quality of care for our hospital patients. McLeod Regional Medical Center went live with this program on 10/18/22. These services are being expanded to McLeod Clarendon. This program has a substantial positive impact for our patients. The TelePsychiatry Program gives McLeod Health physicians an important tool to treat our patients faster, which can result in better outcomes and lower lengths of stay for our patients. The data for this program shows that on average, this patient population's length of stay has decreased by 5 days.

#### Direct-to-Consumer Programs

##### Convenient Care:

McLeod Health continues to have steady volume and high patient satisfaction scores with the Direct-to-Consumer Program. This program increases access to care for low-acuity urgent care throughout our region.

#### Primary Care & Outpatient Programs

##### Maternal Fetal Monitoring (MFM):

As an SCTA HUB, we can benefit from partnerships with other HUBS while our patients get the benefit of receiving quick, convenient, and quality care from trusted South Carolina providers. The MFM Program is one such partnership. MFM Specialists with MUSC provide education, genetic counseling, and ultrasounds to high-risk mothers throughout their pregnancy. McLeod Health has worked with MUSC to offer this program since 2014 and it continues to provide patients with a better understanding of their special needs during pregnancy and improved outcomes for expectant mothers.

#### Health Equity Programs

##### TeleProbate Hearings:

An average of 1 in 8 ER visits is related to a mental disorder or substance use. With the ability to interface with a probate judge through the TeleProbate Hearings program, we are able to admit those patients, quickly move them from the ER, and provide the best environment and treatment they need. TeleProbate Hearings allow the judge and attorney to remain in their office and video conference into those hearings. This program continues to provide quicker transfers of our behavioral health patients to the appropriate facility and more expedient discharges as well.

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*McLeod Regional Medical Center • McLeod Darlington • McLeod Dillon • McLeod Loris • McLeod Seacoast • McLeod Health Cheraw  
McLeod Behavioral Health Services • McLeod Physician Associates • McLeod Family Medicine Center*



Prisma Health  
Telehealth Service Updates and Progress  
Q1 January – March 2023

**Service Extension**

Prisma Health continues to support and broaden the use of core virtual care modalities in our ambulatory settings to extend the reach of services. High demand services like behavioral health have seen a significant increase in virtual visit utilization with over 40% of their visits system-wide being delivered through telehealth. Incorporating peripheral devices into enhanced virtual care video visits allows our care teams to complete a more thorough exam typical of an in-person visit.

**Hospital Support**

Prisma Health launched a Virtual Care Partners program extending the care team for inpatients at select rural facilities to include a virtual nurse team member responsible for admission, discharge and patient education tasks. This pilot program aims to demonstrate that care teams structured with both in-person and virtual support will improve patient outcomes, reduce length of stay and clinical complications, increase throughput, reduce costs and extend limited clinical expertise to more patients across the network.

Similarly, there has been an increased focus on the telesitter program for scalable, real-time patient monitoring needs in-house. A centralized team of virtualists support an average of 60-70 cameras per day across the system. This monitoring has increased quality of care and patient and staff safety by directly preventing a variety of adverse events such as falls, device loss or elopement.

Prisma Health continues to have steady utilization of telehealth for specialty care including complex pediatric care, pain management, infectious disease, neurology and intensive care. This quarter the Prisma Health Hospital at Home program reached a new program milestone, serving over 1000 patients since inception.

**Convenient Care**

Prisma Health initiatives supporting convenient care center around primary solutions for clinical chatbots, outreach, eVisits and urgent care. Clinical chats are being optimized for diabetes management, ED post discharge and childhood obesity use cases. Texting solutions have been integrated with the patient portal to allow for seamless integration of appointment reminders and video visit technology. eVisits continue to be a popular offering for Prisma Health patients with a 50% return customer rate and 98% patient satisfaction rate. A new partnership for the system with WellStreet allows us to provide patients extended urgent care offerings, including telehealth.

**Primary Care Support**

Prisma Health offers a variety of services for chronic condition management and remote patient monitoring; approximately 10,000 patients are currently under some variation of ambulatory remote patient monitoring services allowing us to better support and coordinate care outside the direct hospital system.

**Health Equity**

Prisma Health continues to promote health equity by supporting virtual care initiatives at schools, correctional facilities, community outreach centers and satellite clinics for specialty care.



# *State of South Carolina*

## *Department of Mental Health*

### **MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION:**

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### South Carolina Department of Mental Health Telehealth Service Updates and Progress Q1 Calendar Year 2023, April 2023

#### **Service Extension**

DMH's Community Telepsychiatry program helps increase access to mental healthcare by providing telepsychiatry services through 60 Mental Health Centers and satellite clinics statewide. DMH has helped patients in the state access specialized mental health care services, including child and adolescent psychiatry, since 2013.

To date in 2023, approximately 42%, or over 25,000, services provided by MDs and APRNs are telepsychiatry, up from 40% in the same period last year. DMH's Community Telepsychiatry program serves patients in a wide variety of settings from Community Mental Health Centers and satellite clinics to schools and RV mobile clinics.

The RV mobile clinics are the Highway to Hope (H2H) Outreach Program, which provides telehealth services and telepsychiatry. H2H serves patients at local businesses and community organizations state wide and RV mobile clinics are available through all 16 Mental Health Centers. The mobile clinical care team includes an adult mental health professional, child mental health professional, a registered nurse, and a nurse practitioner.

#### **Hospital Support**

DMH's Emergency Department (ED) Telepsychiatry program has 26 hospital partners across the state and is in the process of adding new partners. In Q1 of calendar year 2023, the ED Telepsychiatry program provided over 2,200 consults for patients in EDs statewide. Psychiatric care is available through the ED program 17 hours per day, 365 days per year.

#### **Convenient Care**

The SC-HOPES program, in collaboration with the SC Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, provides financial support for a range of behavioral health services, allowing patients to receive treatment at low to no cost. Telepsychiatry and telehealth services are provided by DMH Mental Health Centers and are covered. SC-HOPES operates 24/7; visit [www.sc-hopes.com](http://www.sc-hopes.com) for more information. As of May 31, 2023, the SC HOPES program will retire since the COVID-19 public health emergency ended as of May 11, 2023.

## **Primary Care Support**

In 2021, DMH set a goal to create collaborative relationships with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) throughout the state. The collaborative relationship starts with a co-location format in which primary care is provided within selected DMH community mental health centers. The goal is to increase the level of collaboration to the point where providers from both the FQHCs and the community mental health centers work as a team to treat the “whole” patient. This involves in person as well as telehealth visits where both collaborative organizations provide telehealth and telepsychiatry services to patients.

Prior to this initiative, SCDMH had only worked with two FQHCs. Since January 2022, DMH has added four additional collaborative agreements with the following FQHCs: Barnwell Pediatrics of the Low Country Health Care System in Barnwell County, Rural Health Services in Aiken County, North Central Family Medicine in Chester and York Counties, and Cooperative Health in Richland County.

## **Health Equity**

DMH is partnering with the SC Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to provide child telepsychiatry services to DJJ minors with mental health concerns. This partnership helps address the mental health needs of children involved with the juvenile justice system. To facilitate evaluation and treatment, there is an APRN onsite to support the DMH child and adolescent psychiatrist.

In addition, a partnership with the Department of Social Services is in process to furnish telepsychiatry to youth involved with child welfare services. This arrangement between state agencies will promote cooperative working relationships to make the best use of state resources for a high needs population.



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April 28, 2023

The SC Area Health Education Consortium has focused on ensuring up-to-date telehealth education resources are available on-demand for all health professionals and future health professionals in South Carolina. SCTA funding has helped to support SC AHEC's Office for Telehealth Education in developing and supporting online telehealth courses and seven additional telehealth programs including Palmetto Care Connection's Webinar Wednesday and SC AHEC developed programming available for free for health professionals and students in South Carolina via the [SC AHEC online learning portal](#).

The educational programs listed below support the Supporting Tactical Goal, Education and Training within the CY2023 SCTA Statewide Strategic Plan.

SC AHEC Course Registrations and Course Completers  
(Date range 1/1/2023-3/31/2023)

1. [Telehealth](#) for High School and College Students – 6 New Registrations, **5 Completers**
2. [Telehealth Presenter Certification](#) – 38 New Registrations, **22 Completers**
3. [Telemental Health](#) – 15 New Registrations, **6 Completers**
4. [Foundations of Telehealth](#) – 46 New Registrations, **41 Completers**
5. [Telehealth Implementation](#) – 14 New Registrations, **9 Completers**

**75 Individuals Successful Competed a telehealth module** during January-March 2023.



April 19, 2023

South Carolina ETV  
Calendar Year 2023 Quarter 1 Report  
South Carolina Telehealth Alliance

During this quarter the SCETV Telehealth Team was excited to connect with South Carolina Telehealth Alliance partners to create content about important, innovative ways in which telehealth helps people throughout every region of the state. Our videos brought viewers into the lives of heart failure patients who have an improved quality of life because of telehealth through paramedicine and into the lives of families who benefit from school-based telehealth. In addition, we reported on Congress' extension of telehealth flexibilities following the expiration of the Public Health Emergency.

Our team is collaborating with several partners to produce updated content about tele-psychiatry as well as advancements in school-based telehealth.

The team created 2 new telehealth videos, 1 new blog story, and supported the Alliance's creator of the 2022 annual report.

List of telehealth features:

**Video**

- [Community-based Healthcare Model is 'Invaluable' to Patients Managing Heart Failure](#)
- [February is School-based Health Care Awareness Month.](#)

**Blog**

- [Congress Extends Telehealth Flexibilities For Two More Years](#)

This content is shared via television, email newsletters, multiple websites, and social media platforms.

**In Your Inbox:** The SCTA's monthly newsletter held an average open rate of 30% for Q1, up 20% compared to Q1 in 2022. The click rate 3.4% which is up 27% from last quarter.

**Social Media spotlight:** The South Carolina Telehealth Alliance Facebook 9 new followers from Q4 2022. Our highest reaching post was a post celebrating school-based healthcare awareness month. The post with the highest reactions was on March 16 when we shared a segment from the House-calls documentary about how broadband internet access is closing the digital divide in SC. On Twitter, the SCTA page has 874 followers, up an additional 4 followers from Q4. The SCTA Twitter page received 747 profile visits and 1,123 tweet impressions. Our top Twitter impression for Q1 2023 came from a post about our video on how community paramedics use [telehealth](#) to break barriers to care for heart failure patients at Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System.

# CENTER FOR RURAL AND PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

*from Evidence to Impact*

## **SCTA CY23 Q1 Report**

### **SC Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare**

#### **Telehealth Hubs**

The CRPH community team met with PCC staff in February to discuss their digital inclusion initiatives already taking place in libraries and other locations. From those discussions, the CRPH and Palmetto Care Connections identified the libraries in Marlboro and Orangeburg counties as pilot telehealth access sites. CRPH has been working with the libraries in these two counties to establish a health facilitator/liaison and assessed preliminary readiness and interest incorporating telehealth into library services. These locations have an existing healthcare partner. The ongoing partnership will be explored as an option for keeping care connected to a community-based medical home when appropriate and available. We have pilot planning meetings scheduled in the next months with Marian Wright Edelman Library in Marlboro County as well as Orangeburg County Library and their partners.

The CRPH community team, along with partners at the University of Virginia, Augusta University, and the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, have been exploring the body of literature around Libraries and Health with a specific interest in telehealth and libraries to inform this work of libraries as alternate access points of care. A graduate student assistant in the School of Information Sciences at the University of South Carolina is in the process of drafting a white paper in May which we will share with SCTA.

Our team continues to be a part of the national conversation on libraries and telehealth as part of the National Working Group. We will a pilot participant in a national libraries and telehealth in rural training program. During our Libraries and Health Learning collaborative meeting, we discussed lessons learned from libraries previously engaged in telehealth work. Some barriers shared included space constraints/privacy and establishing workflow with the health care provider. As a result, this summer, we will conduct some qualitative research, assessing library patrons' attitudes and perceptions regarding accessing telehealth through libraries. This will inform our work as we prepare to establish the pilot locations and build an implementation guide on what would make a location successful.

#### **Telehealth and Behavioral Health**

The Center continues to engage with practices and health systems to discover programs and plans for integrating behavioral health into their primary care settings. While many are learning that telehealth allows for more reach while maintaining the quality of care, workforce availability is a barrier to the initiation and expansion of integrated behavioral health in South Carolina. Systems and practices need help to recruit and retain staff to serve as behavioral health specialists.

Rural practices have also expressed challenges with recruiting behavioral health care providers at various licensures. This is primarily an issue related to billing requirements for specific CPT codes and requirements associated with the Rural designation status of the practices.



### **Telehealth Awareness and Education**

Educational events such as Webinar Wednesday and the Annual Telehealth Summit are being planned to promote telehealth and broadband in South Carolina in 2023. Although there were not any webinars hosted in Quarter 1, all archives are available on Palmetto Care Connections' website for review.

PCC participated in the Education Workgroup to identify new partners to add to the group along with planning future educational activities.

### **Broadband and Technology**

Broadband filings for the FCC's Healthcare Connect Fund were all due on May 1, 2023 so the duration of Quarter 1 was spent gathering data and information from health care providers participating in SC's Broadband Consortium that was needed to submit Funding Requests through the FCC's HCF Portal.

### **Digital Literacy**

PCC coordinated approximately 16 Digital Literacy classes in Quarter 1 reaching approximately 250 low income residents and providing them with training, a free laptop and assistance with obtaining affordable internet. PCC also created a Digital Navigation Program whereby we help eligible subscribers apply for internet subsidies through the FCC.

PCC was awarded the National "Redefining American Healthcare Award" by the Healthcare Leadership Council, a national non-profit organization. The HLC organized and coordinated an Award Ceremony in Bamberg on February 15, 2023 and Congressman Jim Clyburn was in attendance to present this award to PCC.