



VideoCare
SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO
TELEHEALTH NETWORK



Southwestern Ontario
TeleHealth Network
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SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO



Demographics:

- 1.5 million residents
- 24,000 sq. km
- Medically under-served

Regional Planning:

- Long history of working together



BACKGROUND



- Partners include 40 healthcare providers
- Awarded \$2.0 million from Health Canada's CHIPP initiative
- Matched contributions from regional healthcare partners
- IP-based videoconferencing network
- Target completion - March 31, 2003



PROJECT GOALS



- Improve patient access to healthcare resources - *closer to home*
- Enable care providers to communicate with colleagues - across Region
 - Promoting health systems integration
- Support Physicians in rural, under-serviced communities
 - Improve recruitment and retention of professionals



GOVERNANCE



Regional Steering Committee

- CEOs and VPs of partner organizations
- Signed Memorandum of Agreement
- Identify and allocate necessary resources
- Review and endorse regional TeleHealth policies/processes (patient care, new partners and programs)



BEST PRACTICES



- Steering Committee recognized need to understand strengths/weaknesses of previous Telehealth networks
- Recruited telehealth consultants
 - to work with team to design/implement tools & processes ensuring successful integration of telehealth in clinical programs
 - developed practices/processes towards sustainable network



KEY SUCCESS FACTORS



- 'User' friendly for the clinical groups
- At the 'point of care'
- Standardized across the region
- Integrated into healthcare practices
- On-going evaluation and cost-benefit analysis

Must be sustainable - clinically and financially



CLINICAL PROGRAMS



- Major focus of Health Canada and Ministry of Health
- 7 Regional program partners (dialysis, geriatrics, oncology, paediatrics, stroke, ophthalmology and radiology)
- Clinical program formed Steering Committees and completed a 'Service design manual'



CLINICAL PROGRAMS



Regional Geriatric Program

- case conferencing & geriatric clinics, psycho geriatric clinics, pre-admission & pre-discharge planning

Regional Renal Dialysis Program

- 7 satellite units, semi-urgent consults, weekly rounds, case conferencing, allied health



CLINICAL PROGRAMS



London Regional Cancer Centre

- Breast Cancer Education and Support
- Multidisciplinary GU Tumor Board Rounds

Ophthalmology

- 600 patients supported annually for IVFA using digital network (with linkage to North Network)



EDUCATION



Southwest Ontario Medical Education Network (SWOMEN)

- Training of 36 Clinical Clerks and Medical Residents outside London
- Funded by MoHLTC and commences Sept '03
- Support for faculty within the region
- CME activities for SWOT-N partners



PROJECT COMPONENTS



- Network infrastructure
- Videoconferencing hardware
- Operational management
 - Building clinical programs
 - Network scheduling and maintenance
 - Evaluation & Communication



NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE



- Smart Systems for Health – Branch of the Ontario MoH
- Providing 'free', secure, private IP network for healthcare providers in Ontario
- All hospitals, Cancer Care and CCAC sites will be connected
- Guaranteed protection of bandwidth



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VIDEO HARDWARE





CALL SCHEDULING



- Network has capacity to support bridging – the ability to bring up to 24 other sites, into 1 call
- Scheduling was problematic for previous telehealth networks
- Web-based scheduling system – organizes, initiates and tracks the videoconferences
- Calls can be scheduled – from anywhere, by authorized users



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OPERATION MANAGEMENT



- Regional Steering Committee
- VideoCare Staff – physician consultants, clinical managers, project manager, evaluator and financial analyst
- Technical Advisory Team
- Clinical Users Group



EVALUATION



- To determine whether initiative reached vision of “care closer to home”, evaluation underway to assess:
 - Patient and provider satisfaction
 - Integration into clinical care
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Security and confidentiality of patient information



CHALLENGES



- Physician reimbursement
- Learning curve for physicians/care providers
- Acceptance of videoconferencing vs. traditional in-person assessment
- Blending the clinical and technical groups



FUTURE GOALS



- Development of Electronic Health Record
- Expanding the number of clinical program participants
- Continuing to work with MoHLTC in development of policies and funding formula that support Telehealth
- Seeking out additional funding opportunities to develop and evaluate new technologies



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FINAL THOUGHTS ...



Telehealth is about people,
process and the delivery of
clinical services, not just
technology