SCTA Quarterly Report CY24 Quarter 4

Progress Achieved on the CY2024 Strategic Plan
October - December 2024

SOUTH CAROLINA
Telehealth
ALLIANCE

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South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA)

CY2024 Q4 Report

Executive Summary

The South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA) and its partners successfully concluded the final quarter of the 2024 calendar year (October 1 – December 31), continuing to execute key CY24 strategic telehealth initiatives while also preparing for the implementation of the CY2025 SCTA Strategic Plan.

To broaden our statewide reach and increase telehealth promotion, the SCTA launched a LinkedIn account during the quarter. Through this platform, we will share SCETV telehealth videos, telehealth events and opportunities, telehealth advocacy news, and more. Follow us to stay up-to-date on the latest telehealth developments in South Carolina!

In October, the SCTA gathered with statewide partners and stakeholders during the 12th Annual Telehealth Summit of South Carolina, hosted by SCTA partner Palmetto Care Connections (PCC). This event serves as a venue for collaboration among telehealth stakeholders, healthcare leaders, legislators, and others who share a commitment to advancing telehealth in the state. As a proud Diamond Sponsor of the Summit each year, the SCTA managed an exhibitor booth, fulfilling its role as a statewide telehealth resource, engaging with attendees, fostering connections, and addressing questions and needs. More information on the Summit's success can be found in the PCC section of this report.

The following report provides further details on these achievements and other key milestones from **CY24Q4**.

SOUTH CAROLINA
Telehealth
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South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA)
CY24Q4 Report

SCTA Statewide Strategy
Activity in CY24Q4 focused on planning and preparation for the CY2025 strategy, which was presented to the SCTA Advisory Council during the Q4 meeting. While the overall strategic direction remained largely unchanged, tactics and progress metrics were refined to better reflect the volume and reach of work of SCTA partners. As the SCTA continues to mature a decade into its founding, CY2025 will serve as a planning year for the next iteration of the statewide telehealth strategic plan, to be launched in CY2026.

Sustainability and Reimbursement Advocacy
During Q3, SCTA leaders held a virtual briefing with SC Congressional Delegation staff, presenting them with a letter of support signed by over 20 SC healthcare organizations, urging swift action to extend Federal telehealth flexibilities set to expire on December 31, 2024. In December, the 2025 Continuing Resolution, titled the American Relief Act 2025, was signed into law **extending these flexibilities for 3 months – until March 31, 2025**. While the short-term extension temporarily mitigated a "telehealth cliff", making these flexibilities permanent would ensure continued access to telehealth care for Medicare beneficiaries.

As of October 1, 2024, SC Medicaid began covering Behavioral Health Collaborative Care (CoCM) codes. CoCM is an evidence-based model that involves a Behavioral Health Care Manager and Psychiatric Consultant working with a Primary Care Provider to manage a patient's behavioral health. As this model of care is largely delivered remotely, this update is now reflected in the SCTA payer scorecard.

SCTA Supported Technologies, Equipment, & Platforms
The SCTA's premium instance of Doxy.Me, a HIPAA-compliant telehealth platform, remains a free offering to SC providers. During the quarter, over **10,200 visits** occurred with **195,185 minutes** of care provided, and **18 new providers** joined the instance.

SCTA Digital Navigation & Connectivity Initiatives
Digital Navigation efforts continued to mature in collaboration with the SC Broadband Office and Palmetto Care Connections, aimed to develop digital literacy and broadband affordability strategies for our state. Through a series of meetings during the quarter, strategies were discussed on how to best leverage our respective expertise in broadband deployment, digital literacy, and telehealth services to build a collaborative initiative connecting South Carolina's most vulnerable populations to care.

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Medical University of South Carolina
Telehealth Service Updates and Progress
October – December, 2024

Service Extension

During Q4, MUSC's ambulatory direct-to-consumer telehealth operations team focused on optimization, implementing an automated pre-visit patient check-in process to boost efficiency and patient experience. Meanwhile, MUSC's Virtual Specialty Program continued to expand its services welcoming two sleep medicine specialists and a gastroenterologist to the team this quarter. Looking ahead to CY2025, the program will continue to grow in response to increasing demand, with plans to onboard a primary care physician and two benign hematology advanced practice providers in Q1, followed by an endocrinology provider in Q2.

MUSC's Regional Telehealth Timeshare Clinics concluded 2024 on a high note, successfully facilitating over 2,000 virtual visits during the year and achieving a major milestone with the opening of MUSC Health Primary Care - Oak Hill Medical Park in Sumter. In 2025, the team plans to expand by adding a new regional clinic in Orangeburg and introducing a pediatric heart failure clinic. Focused on growth, service expansion, and innovation, the program aims to improve access to high-quality care across the state.

Hospital Support

MUSC's Virtual Nursing Program experienced rapid growth throughout 2024, now fully integrated across all of MUSC's Regional Health Network (RHN) sites, supporting more than 12 units statewide. The program has garnered positive feedback from both bedside teams and patients alike. By assisting with admissions, discharges, and patient-specific education in adult medical-surgical units, the program has been able to significantly free up time for bedside staff. Additionally, with successful expansion to pediatric inpatient units, the team plans to extend support to neonatal-ICUs in CY25.

In parallel with these developments, the hospital-based telehealth operations team has seen exciting advancements, including the successful transition of their tele-hospitalist service to MUSC's new telehealth platform at the end of CY24. The team also launched tele-endocrinology at MUSC Health Lancaster Medical Center during the quarter to better meet the needs of this patient population. Looking ahead, the team is working to launch a new emergency department telehealth psychiatry service across select RHN sites. This initiative will involve a dedicated team of providers and social work support, aiming to provide timely and appropriate care for psychiatry patients in the emergency department.

Convenient Care

In 2024, the MUSC Virtual Urgent Care program provided over 62,000 consultations, addressing common concerns such as upper respiratory infections, urinary tract infections, and eye conditions. Building on this success, the program plans to expand its offerings in 2025 to include cosmetic medicine and initial STI management in collaboration with the SC Department of Public Health. The team is also committed to enhancing the overall patient experience through targeted improvements in platform navigation and usability, ensuring seamless access to care for a growing patient population.

Primary Care Support
The MUSC Center for Telehealth was recently awarded a prestigious Duke Endowment Grant to support the Telehealth Primary Care Integration (TPCI) Services Initiative. This initiative aims to: (1) create a unified access point for TPCI services by developing a website/portal for easy access to TPCI services, (2) optimize key TPCI services for SC providers by refining a curated list of telehealth services for SC primary care providers, including behavioral health, specialty access, and chronic disease management, and (3) expand telehealth education and technical assistance through a resource library and a Project ECHO program for specialized training and support.

The MUSC Collaborative Care Management (CoCM) Program continues to experience significant growth with plans to soon expand into the Charleston region after its successful Catawba region expansion. The CoCM model fosters a team-based approach to virtual behavioral health services, where behavioral health care managers collaborate with primary care providers under the supervision of a consulting psychiatrist.

The remote patient monitoring team focused on expansion plans for hypertension and diabetes services, while also driving increased utilization at existing clinics. The team also worked to optimize MyChart functionalities to support providers in streamlining patient enrollment.

Health Equity
MUSC's school-based telehealth team successfully completed the expansion of both physical and behavioral health services to all schools in Calhoun and Orangeburg counties this quarter! School nurses and behavioral health point people across these districts have been fully trained, and students are now receiving vital services. The team is also thrilled to announce its official partnership with Berkeley County School District, which will extend MUSC's school-based telehealth services to all schools in the district.

MUSC's School-Based Telehealth Behavioral Health Program has experienced exceptional growth and success, ending 2024 with 105 schools actively utilizing the services, and another 54 schools in the pipeline, expected to launch in early 2025. This year alone, the program facilitated over 2,560 patient visits, the majority being Medicaid patients. Common reasons for visits included anxiety, depression, trauma, grief and loss, ADHD, among others.

McLeod Health
The Choice for Medical Excellence

McLeod Health Telehealth Service Updates and Progress
CY24Q4 / October – December 2024

Service Extension
During CY24Q4, the Centralized Services Department saw an increase in Epic video visits. This is the result of an effort of our Virtual Health provider being available to see patients when their PCP is unavailable or does not have capacity to see additional patients. This allows patients to still be seen by a McLeod provider and not have to go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Room for acute issues.

Hospital Support
Our Pexip platform has provided a more stable connection for our specialty providers to care for patients. A new program is being developed to provide care in our New Carolina Forest Micro-hospital. The four beds will accommodate inpatient, observation, and outpatient statuses. This program will allow hospitalists in our Loris and Seacoast locations to round on these patients. This program will go live January 27, 2025.

Optimization of the Remote Sitter program is still a main focus. The Remote Sitter program has been live for a year now and the goal is to scale the program to several of the other locations. Cheraw being the first, went live with the program on November 20th with 3 carts available to monitor patients who meet criteria.

There is work still being done with the Prisma team to optimize the Children's Hospital Specialty Consults program. We are in the final stages and hope to Go Live in February.

Convenient Care
We have seen an increase in patient visits during the Q3. Some of the increase was due to marketing the platform on our Weekly Huddle. Patient satisfaction scores remain high with the increase in volume.

Primary Care Support
Focus on developing more Primary Support Programs.

Health Equity
The School Based Care Program has been extremely successful with 84 visits since the start of the2024 school year. Having a dedicated School Based provider, who builds relationships with the students and staff, is the key to how successful this program has become. There has been an ask to expand the program to several other schools within Florence School District 1. There are conversations taking place about where the program will be most beneficial. We are hopeful to expand next school year.

Prisma Health
Telehealth Service Updates and Progress
(Q4: Oct – Dec. 2024)

Service Extension

Due to the success of using telehealth for transplant patient consults, this program was expanded to include Pre-Op and Pharmacy education as well. In keeping with this collaboration, both cardiac and pulmonary departments incorporated telehealth into their patient education process.

E-Consults in various specialties, especially for rural areas, has seen tremendous growth. Since this is provider to provider, the process is not dependent on which state the patient resides.   Specialties include Endocrinology, Cardiology, Hematology, Psychiatry, Infectious Disease and Rheumatology.

Prisma Invested in both expanding and enhancing our existing WeChat Pediatric Wellness program. Every section was updated by our two lead physicians, and we are rolling out this option at no cost to the community by adding a simple QR code.

The PCC was well attended by Prisma staff and leadership, highlighting and sharing our many programs with other attendees. Prisma's VP of Application Services, Tina Myers, served on a discussion panel around the future of telehealth while both Adult Virtual Care Partners and Pediatric Telehealth were prominently featured in exhibits.

Hospital Support

Teladoc Enterprise Sign On was successfully launched for Stroke, Neonatal and Infectious Disease consult providers. This eliminated the need to manually enter login information at each launch, streamlining access in emergencies where time is of the essence.

Granting access for new providers was brought in-house, allowing for immediate response when providers are onboarding. Inpatient consults were further supported with the addition of new stethoscopes which allowed providers the ability to hear breath and lung sounds in real time and with impressive clarity.

New consult devices were launched to replace existing carts, providing additional stability in emergencies. Inpatient consults continued its growth to include Pediatric Endocrinology and Medical Toxicology.

Convenient Care

Prisma successfully launched Epic's native E-Visit platform, giving users asynchronous care with a less than two-hour clinical assessment. Usage for December totaled 1,461 visits. Patients and providers are now able to stay within Epic for a more streamlined process for care and ease of documentation. Providers were also able to customize patient questionnaires and expand covered conditions.

After its first year, the Pediatric Walk In Clinic doubled the number of video visits conducted in Q4 over the first half of the year.

Primary Care Support

The program for providing Psych consults was expanded to include patients who visited Baptist Parkridge Hospital for OB visits. This allowed patients to complete two objectives during one visit.

Prisma created a workflow improvement process for adding an interpreter to a video visit making the process much more efficient for all staff and providers while reducing a perceived roadblock from some providers/offices.

Telehealth allowed many patients to receive care remotely when in–office visits were not possible or extremely difficult to arrange. Consider an elderly patient w/ Parkinson's, Dementia, CHF, PAD, CVA, and declining in general, who presented to the hospital or called the fire department weekly for falls, CVA and fluid overload.   This patient's daughter was the sole care-provider.   Regular telehealth visits included both ancillary and support staff in addition to providers, all without having to make the necessary arrangements an in-office visit would entail. This patient's ER visits and calls to the Fire Department have been totally eliminated.

Health Equity

Prisma Health and McLeod embarked on an expanded collaboration around pediatric consults for the McLeod patient population. Additional Prisma providers were brought onboard to implement and support this expanded model.

Expansions of two primary care offices have taken place for a dedicated "telehealth" room in both to remove the specific area barriers of 1) rural internet issues and 2) economically challenged related transportation issues.

Hired and trained our new provider for Virtual Care visits for our "On Track" Greenville County Schools.

State of South Carolina
Department of Mental Health

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Robert Bank, MD
Acting State Director

South Carolina Department of Mental Health
Telehealth Service Updates and Progress
Q4, January 2025

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.

In the fourth quarter, over 16,000 services, which is approximately 41% of overall mental health services provided by MDs and APRNs, were telepsychiatry. DMH's Community Telepsychiatry program serves patients in a wide variety of settings from Mental Health Centers and satellite clinics to schools and RV mobile clinics.

Hospital Support

DMH's Emergency Department (ED) Telepsychiatry program continued with 27 hospital partners across the state and is in the process of adding new partners. In 43 of calendar year 2024, the ED Telepsychiatry program provided approximately 1,367 completed consults for patients in EDs statewide. Psychiatric care is available through the ED program 17 hours per day, 364 days per year.

Primary Care Support

DMH's Integrated Care team has continued progress on the HRSA grant (American Rescue Plan Act – Pediatric Mental Health Care Access New Area Expansion) to develop the state's first child psychiatry access network to support the provision of mental health care by primary care providers. The network was named the Youth Access to Psychiatry Program (YAP-P). The goal is to provide a continuum of supports to SC primary care providers who see children and youth ages 0-21 years. YAP-P provides resources to practices and providers statewide.

Funding began in the fall of 2021 for the 5-year grant. YAP-P also received a $300,000 expansion award in the fall of 2022 from HRSA to look at expanding the network to include school-based health centers (SBHCs).

Health Equity

DMH's partnership continues with the SC Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to provide child telepsychiatry services to DJJ minors with mental health concerns in secure facilities. This partnership helps address the mental health needs of children involved with the juvenile justice system. To facilitate evaluation and treatment, an APRN supports the remote DMH child and adolescent psychiatrist.

In addition, DMH provides an interagency consultation service with the SC Department of Social Services (DSS) and DJJ to furnish telepsychiatry to at risk children and adolescents. Children referred by DJJ for this program are not located in secure facilities. This innovative collaboration among state agencies promotes cooperative working relationships to make the best use of state resources for a high needs population.

Service Extension

During the fourth quarter of 2024, Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System continued to offer and encourage utilization of EMR-based video visits as an option for patients to be seen when applicable. This was especially important with the uncertainties related to federal waivers expiring at the end of 2024.

Hospital Support

Q4 saw expansion of telestroke workflows to include coverage of all code strokes, both in the emergency department settings as well as inpatient units. This translates to more rapid treatment for patients, and alignment of nursing processes.

Convenient Care

The SRHS Virtual Urgent Care platform continues to see an increase in utilization. The provider group responding to patients on this platform also grew, allowing for shorter wait times and expanded coverage. Ongoing marketing of this service line continued, utilizing online advertising, social media promotion, digital billboards, and campaigning to area schools and businesses.

Primary Care Support

Planning continues for implementation of a new remote patient monitoring program, whose initial focus will be on diabetic patients in rural Union and Cherokee counties.

Health Equity

The SRHS Heart Failure Clinic expanded its Mobile Integrated Health Paramedicine Program to include new equipment, another vehicle, and an additional staff member. This expansion allows for more patients to enroll in the program and be treated more frequently.

The SRHS School-Based Telehealth program served patients in 4 schools in Cherokee County and 1 school in Union County. The program saw utilization of the service increase with additional consented students able to utilize the service and has a goal to expand into more schools in both counties in 2025.

January 10, 2025

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 in developing and supporting online telehealth courses. SC AHEC developed and maintains these on-demand programs at no-cost for current health workforce and health profession students in South Carolina via the SC AHEC Learning Portal.

The educational programs listed below support the Supporting Tactical Goal, Education and Training within the CY2024 SCTA Statewide Strategic Plan.

SC AHEC Telehealth Training Attendance
(Date range 10/1/2024-12/31/2024)

1. Telehealth for High School and College Students – **15 Attendees**

2. Telehealth Presenter Certification – **33 Attendees**

3. Telemental Health – **35 Attendees**

4. Foundations of Telehealth – **33 Attendees**

5. Telehealth Implementation – **32 Attendees**

6. Interprofessional Team Case Conference (ITCC) – **12 Attendees**

160 Individuals attended a telehealth training from SC AHEC during October-December 2024.

www.scahec.net
(843) 792-4431 / (843) 792-4430 Fax
The South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium is an equal opportunity employer.

January 21, 2025
South Carolina ETV
Calendar Year 2023 Quarter 4 Report
South Carolina Telehealth Alliance

In the final quarter of 2024, the *SCETV Telehealth* Team published 11 videos that raised awareness of telehealth initiatives and successes throughout South Carolina. In October our team supported SCTA partners by producing eight award videos for the Annual Telehealth Summit of South Carolina. During the Summit, we recorded breakout sessions and plenary sessions as well as conducted interviews with attendees. Following the conference, we produced a video spotlighting a Digital Divide Simulation event and a general recap of the conference.

In December our team published a video highlighting MUSC Health Black River Medical Center- a new community hospital located in Williamsburg County. The video explores the reason behind closures of rural hospitals and showcases the unique technology available at Black River Medical Center. Also, in December we published a video featuring the Medical University of South Carolina's ICU Innovations program which serves ICUs throughout the state.

List of telehealth features:

2024 Telehealth State Champion Dr. Patrick Cawley

2024 Rick Foster Primary Care Telehealth Champion Dr. Danette McAlhaney

2024 Technology Champion Matt Hiatt

2024 State Telehealth Legislative Champion SC State Representative Sylleste Davis

2024 Telehealth Innovator Dr. Dominic Gault

2024 Telehealth Program of Excellence: Improved Care and Provision of Rural Access to Eliminate Health Disparities (iCARE)

2024 Telehealth Pioneer Dr. Robert Bank

2024 Telehealth Trailblazer Caitlin Moore

Digital Divide Simulation Illustrates impact of no internet access

[This new rural hospital shows telehealth model is template for rural health viability](#)

[This educational platform brings clinical best practices to community hospitals](#)

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

Social Media Highlights:

The South Carolina Telehealth Alliance Facebook page reach is up 42% in Q4. The top performing post was about Black River Medical Center which had 3,655 views and 29 link clicks. A LinkedIn page was created in Q4 and so far, it has 114 followers with posts made in December reaching 384 impressions.

SCTA CY24 Q4 Report

<u>**Rural Practices and Telehealth**</u>
Bamberg Family Practice
We are continuously learning about the support necessary to integrate telehealth into a rural health practice. Remote Patient Monitoring is fairly new for this practice, launched July-Aug 2024. Currently, there are 21 patients enrolled, and the practice is working to increase enrollment each month. To date, many telehealth visits include working with patients to control their A1C and supporting their treatment for URI. It is anticipated that bringing on a more experienced provider will support an increase in the utilization of telehealth services by the patients while continuing to leverage relationships with schools in the local community.

Telehealth in Libraries Implementation Workbook
The initial draft of the telehealth in libraries playbook has been shared with SCTA. After input and approval from SCTA, we will convene a workgroup of subject matter experts and stakeholders to provide input on the resource.

<u>**Telehealth Hubs**</u>
Orangeburg County Public Library
The MUSC provider who was originally a part of the telehealth program at Orangeburg has been on FMLA. No patients have been seen yet. We will discuss working with PCC to distribute their provider survey to reach out to other local providers interested in participating.

<u>**Telehealth Research**</u>
Original Research
Our team is going through the grant contracting process to finalize our partnership with Dr. Sicheng Wang at USC's Department of Geography to conduct a mixed-method study assessing the impact of telehealth on the perceived accessibility of prenatal care in rural South Carolina. This project officially began on January 1, 2025, and the research team is working on documentation to submit for regulatory oversight.

Digital Literacy Program Evaluation
While waiting on to hear the decision on the submitted grant, the CRPH Evaluation team has been reviewing the literature around digital literacy assessments in preparation for this work. The team will meet with PCC staff to determine what changes to implement and when to initiate the transition to new data collection tools.

Palmetto Care Connections
CY24Q4, October - December 2024

Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) believes improving access to healthcare services in rural and underserved communities begins with connecting problems to solutions and people to resources. In Quarter 4, PCC continued to work diligently in its focus areas to increase access, connectivity, and equity.

Focus Area: Telehealth
Palmetto Care Connections attended several health fairs and conferences participating as an exhibitor and/or speaker reaching about 600 health care professionals, community leaders, and patients in Bamberg, Barnwell, Greenville, Hampton, Richland, and Sumter counties.

PCC partnered with the Shiloh Community Center, senior center in Sumter County, to host a Telehealth Kick-off Event on November 14. Seniors will be able to connect to their health care providers via telehealth eliminating transportation barriers and avoiding exposure to illnesses.

Focus Area: Education
Palmetto Care Connections hosted the 12th Annual Telehealth Summit of South Carolina on October 28-30, 2024, at the Westin Hilton Head Resort & Spa (Hilton Head Island, SC). Popular sessions included: Billing and Reimbursement Bootcamp, The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Telehealth, the SC Legislative Panel, Transforming America's Healthcare Future Through a Stronger, More Resilient Workforce, and the Digital Equity Simulation (hosted by KC Digital Drive). There were 264 registrants, 27 sponsors, and 19 poster presenters. Summit presentations and recordings are available on PCC's website at www.palmettocareconnections.org .

Focus Area: Technology (Digital Inclusion)
Spectrum/Charter Communications awarded $25,000 to Palmetto Care Connections to provide digital devices and digital literacy training to residents in Norway, SC, and $25,000 to provide digital devices and digital literacy training to residents in Ridgeville, SC, as it expands its internet services to these communities.

In its partnership with the SC Department of Health and Human Services, PCC used its online modules to reach the needs of digital literacy training participants who are unable to attend in person trainings. The online modules (Telehealth Training, Email Basics I and II, Internet Safety, Zoom Basics, and Google Docs) are available on PCC's website at www.palmettocareconnections.org .

Palmetto Care Connections is dedicated to closing the gap through telehealth, technology, broadband, and education solutions for rural and underserved communities.