

# 2016 Annual Report

TELEHEALTH BEGINS WITH A VISION OF CONNECTING  
PEOPLE TO *PEOPLE* ... CONNECTING RESOURCES TO *NEEDS*...  
AND CONNECTING HEALTH CARE PROBLEMS TO HEALTH CARE SOLUTIONS



# MISSION

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
THROUGH TELEMEDICINE.

# VISION

FACILITATE HEALTH CARE ACCESS ACROSS SOUTH  
CAROLINA THROUGH THE UTILIZATION OF INNOVATIVE  
TECHNOLOGY TO PROMOTE THE PROVISION OF QUALIFIED  
MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS OF VARIOUS DISCIPLINES.

# From the Executive Director

*Fellow South Carolinians,*

*Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) had another amazing year in 2016! We are so fortunate to have the continued support and commitment from our Board of Directors as well as our Advisory Council as our team has worked diligently to improve access to quality health care services in our rural/underserved communities across the state. Over the past year, telehealth has continued to grow in South Carolina and we have been blessed to work with so many great individuals and organizations who truly have the best interest of our citizens in mind.*

*The PCC team believes that...the physical address of a person should NOT define the quality of life that he/she is able to live! Through many partnerships and collaborations, the citizens of South Carolina can rest a little easier knowing that 96% of our state's population is within 60 minutes of expert stroke care. We must however continue to align our resources such that we don't rest until South Carolina has achieved 100%!*

*Although we have made tremendous strides in expanding telehealth in our state, never doubt there continues to be a lot of work ahead of us. According to a report published by MarketsandMarkets, the telehealth business in 2016 was valued at \$2.78 billion and is projected to reach \$9.35 billion by 2021! This amount of growth requires a whole lot of collaboration from health care leaders and organizations across South Carolina as well as the country. It seems that telemedicine was the top regulatory issue in 2016, according to a survey conducted by the Federation of State Medical Boards.*

*Improving access to quality health care services while improving a person's quality of life is a big undertaking and working together through partnerships and collaborations is the ONLY way we can continue to see progress. PCC looks forward to continuing its partnership with the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA) as we move into 2017 and as we work to implement the Statewide Telehealth Strategic Plan. PCC continues to work toward financial sustainability bringing in revenues in 2016 from various contracts such as MUSC and SCORH as well as federal grant dollars.*

*In the year ahead, we will continue our focus on expanding our ability to support the delivery of health care in rural/underserved communities through the use of telehealth. We will broaden our services to better serve our communities and we will continue to expand our collaboration efforts and partnerships!*



*Sincerely,*

*Kathy G Schwarting, MHA  
Executive Director*



## 2016 Board Members

**Graham Adams, Ph.D., PCC Board Chair  
Chief Executive Officer  
SC Office of Rural Health**

**Rick Foster, MD, PCC Vice Chair  
Executive Director  
Catalyst for Health  
SC Hospital Association**

**Will Harms, MD, MBA  
Vice President of Medical Affairs  
SC Blue Cross Blue Shield**

**Tripp Jennings, MD, PCC Treasurer  
System Vice President, Medical Informatics Officer  
Palmetto Health**

**Danette F. McAlhane, MD  
Family Practitioner  
Bamberg Family Practice**

**James McElligott, MD  
Medical Director of Telehealth Services  
Assistant Professor, General Pediatrics  
Medical University of South Carolina**

**Meera Narasimhan, MD, DFAPA  
Associate Provost Health Sciences  
Professor and Chair, Department of Neuropsychiatry and  
Behavioral Science  
USC-School of Medicine**

**Gregory Rusnak, FACHE  
Executive Vice President  
Chief Operating Officer  
Greenville Health System**



*Pictured (From Left to Right): Rick Foster, MD, PCC Board Member, Matt Hiatt, Technology Director, Davia Smith, MHA, PCC Education Coordinator, Trayce Shanks, RN, PCC Telehealth Clinical Coordinator, Danette McAlhane, MD, PCC Board Member, Kathy Schwarting, MHA, PCC Executive Director, and Lynn Glenn, NP, Rural Health Provider*

## **2016 SCORH Rural Health Program of the Year Award**

This award was presented to Palmetto Care Connections for its positive impact on rural healthcare in South Carolina.

*“As the recipient of the 2016 Rural Health Care Program Award, PCC exemplifies strong advocacy and stewardship on behalf of rural providers in South Carolina and demonstrates strong leadership across the state in working to improve access to quality health care for all citizens. SCORH is pleased to partner with PCC in these efforts.”*

*-Graham Adams, PhD, PCC Board Chair  
Chief Executive Officer  
SC Office of Rural Health*

*“The Palmetto Care Connection team has done an amazing job connecting rural healthcare providers and the communities they serve to needed broadband access and telehealth resources. They are truly deserving of the 2016 Rural Health Program of the Year award given annually by the SC Office of Rural Health.”*

*-Rick Foster, MD, PCC Board Vice Chair  
Executive Director, Catalyst for Health  
SC Hospital Association*

# Statewide Telehealth Collaboration



## 2016 SCTA IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION GRANT AWARDEES

*PCC Staff served as grant reviewers.*

GREENWOOD GENETIC CENTER TELEHEALTH INITIATIVE

REDUCING THE IMPACT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISES: INNOVATIVE EMS-MENTAL HEALTH CENTER TELEHEALTH MODEL

INCREASING ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

FEASIBILITY OF EOSINOPHILIC ESOPHAGITIS FOLLOW-UP CARE THROUGH TELEMEDICINE: A PILOT STUDY ON PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

MUSC HEART HEALTH TELEHEALTH PILOT

PEDIATRIC TELEHEALTH ACUTE ASTHMA PROGRAM

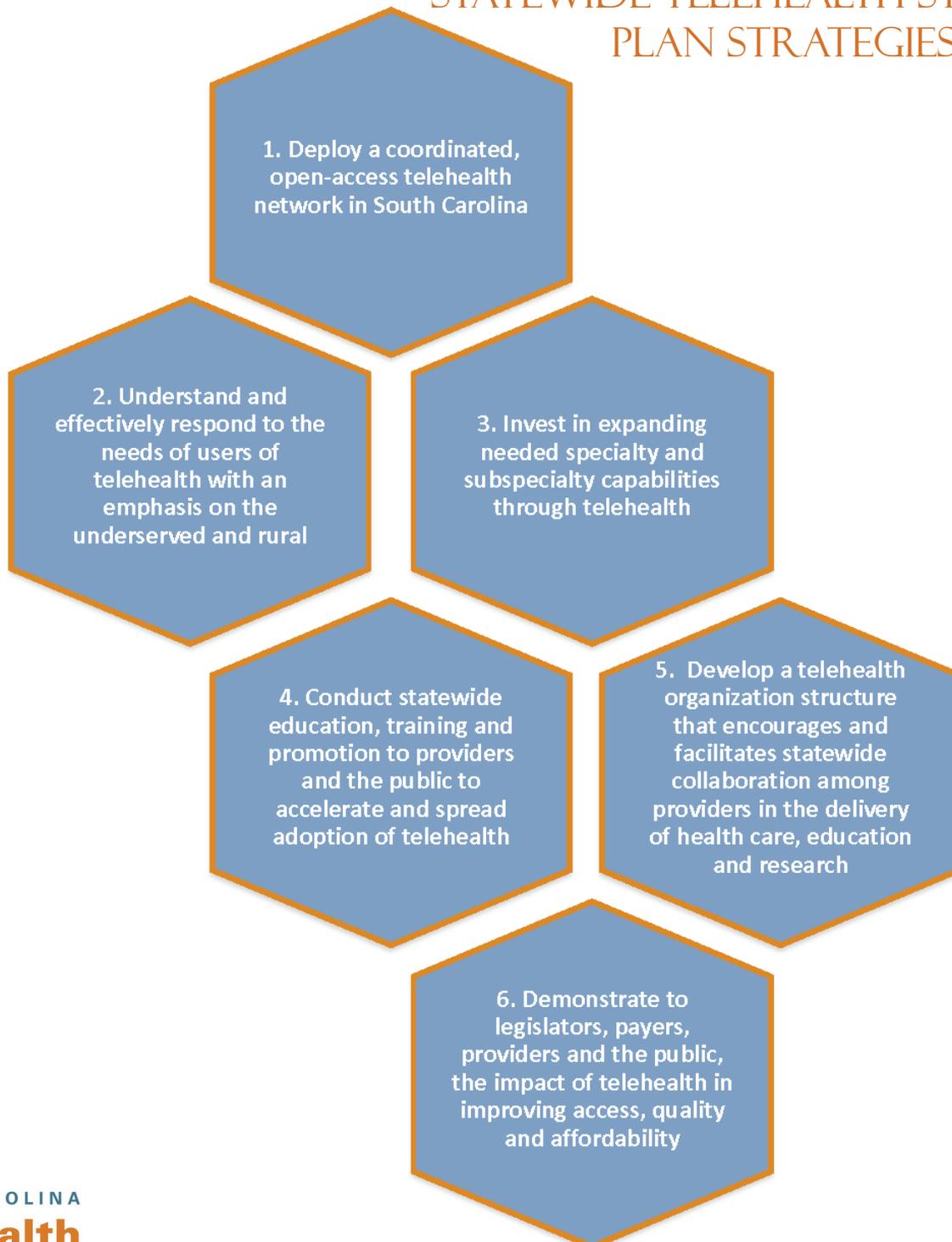
THE ROLE OF TELEMEDICINE IN ENHANCING THE CARE OF PATIENTS WITH KIDNEY DISEASE AND KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

USING TELEMEDICINE AND ACTIVITY TRACKERS TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN LOW-INCOME OLDER ADULTS

# Partnering with the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA)

Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) assisted the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA) in successfully completing all of the deliverables in the 2016 Statewide Telehealth Strategic Plan. Kathy Schwarting, Executive Director of PCC, assisted James McElligott, MD in co-chairing the SCTA Advisory Group in 2016. We are very fortunate to have this partnership!

## STATEWIDE TELEHEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIES



# Partnering with the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance (SCTA)

STRATEGY 1: Deploy a Coordinated, Open Access telehealth network in South Carolina

Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) formed a Centralized Credentialing Workgroup that consisted of Directors/VPs of Medical Staff Services from all of the Telehealth Hub providers – Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), Greenville Health System, McLeod, Palmetto Health and the SC Department of Mental Health.

The workgroup designed a preliminary model of what a statewide centralized credentialing program for all of the telehealth providers in SC might look like. PCC/MUSC presented this model to Medical Staff managers of Hospitals across SC at the SC Association of Medical Staff Services to gain their interest for such a model and to gather their ideas. PCC then designed a Survey regarding how a statewide model may look and it was sent out to all hospitals in SC. Results from this survey will be shared with the Workgroup in early 2017 and with this data, a formal Statewide Centralized Credentialing model will be proposed.

STRATEGY 2: Understand and effectively respond to the needs of users of telehealth with an emphasis on the rural/underserved

- Established service development priorities based on the 2015 needs assessment of the four county area of Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell and Hampton.
- Provided support and training to rural healthcare providers in counties of Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, and Hampton.
- Consulted with South Carolina Free Clinic Association to incorporate telehealth services into their clinics.

STRATEGY 4: Conduct Statewide education, training and promotion to providers and the public to accelerate and spread adoption of telehealth.

With the assistance of the Education Committee with members representing PCC, USC School of Medicine, SCTA, AHEC, SCDHHS, this group accomplished several initiatives including:

- Coordinated the Poster Session for The 5th Annual Telehealth Summit. The poster session places a focus on the research component of telehealth. With the assistance of this committee, the poster session grew from a total of 7 at the 4th Annual Telehealth Summit to a total of 22 for the 2016 Summit. This is a tremendous growth spurt that took a lot of effort by this committee.
- Responsible for sending out the Requests for Proposals for the 6 Breakout sessions at the Telehealth Summit. Through hard work, the Education Committee was able to identify 6 key breakout sessions for the Telehealth Summit.
- Coordinated the 1st Pediatric Grand Rounds in South Carolina
- Partnered with Star Telehealth to offer online telehealth certifications on PCC website  
Certified Telemedicine Clinical Presenter and Technical Professional  
Certified Telehealth Coordinator and Technical Presenter  
Certified Telemedicine Clinical Presenter for Telestroke

# Focus Areas

*During a Strategic Planning Retreat in the Spring of 2016, the Board of Directors assisted the PCC Staff in defining its 5 Areas of Focus such that their efforts would drive the mission of improving access to care through the use of telehealth for all South Carolinians. PCC better defines its market as the rural/underserved communities in South Carolina. The 5 Areas of Focus that will drive the activities and efforts of PCC are: Broadband, Technology Services, Program Development, Education, and Advocacy.*

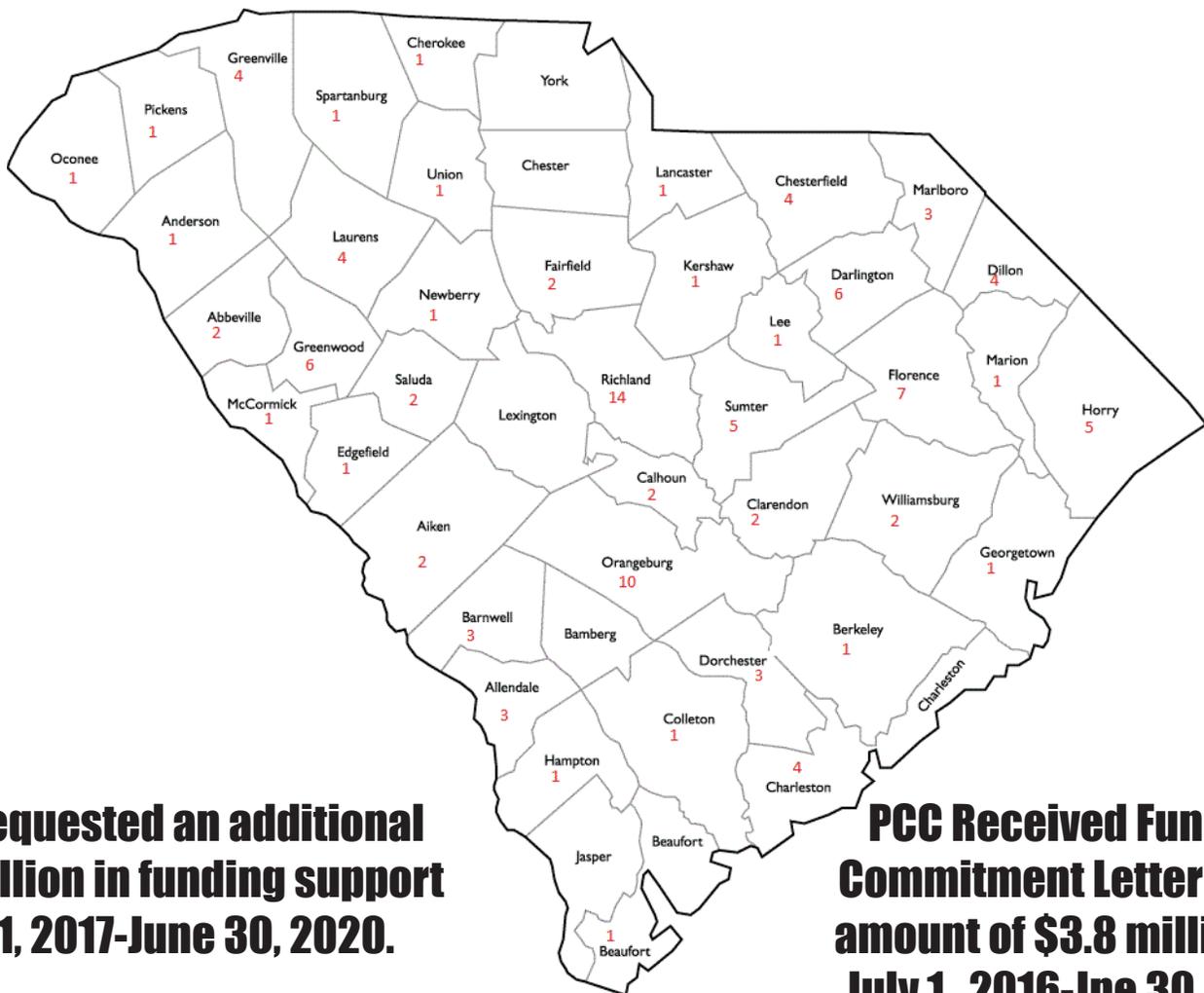


# BROADBAND

**\$1.2 MILLION**  
**IN ANNUAL BROADBAND SAVINGS**

**PSPN**  
**SC**

**Palmetto Care Connections (PCC)/Palmetto State Providers Network (PSPN)**  
**was the first**  
**Broadband Consortium in the United States**  
**to successfully accomplish eligibility approval for**  
**Alcohol and Drug Abuse Centers.**



**PCC requested an additional**  
**\$3.7 million in funding support**  
**July 1, 2017-June 30, 2020.**

**PCC Received Funding**  
**Commitment Letter in the**  
**amount of \$3.8 million for**  
**July 1, 2016-June 30, 2019.**

# BROADBAND

## PSPN MEMBERS

**PSPN Consortium increased by more than 25 new sites in 2016.**

### **SOUTH CAROLINA**

#### **ABBEVILLE COUNTY**

Calhoun Falls Family Practice

#### **AIKEN COUNTY**

Clyburn Center for Primary Care

#### **ALLENDALE COUNTY**

Allendale County Hospital  
Laffitte & Warren Medical Center  
Low Country Health Care System, Inc

#### **ANDERSON COUNTY**

AnMed Health

#### **BAMBERG COUNTY**

Bamberg Family Practice  
Family Health Center, Inc at Denmark  
Michael C. Watson Treatment Facility  
R. Dale Padgett, MD, PA

#### **BARNWELL COUNTY**

Low Country Health Care System, Inc  
Low Country Health Care System, Inc  
Low Country Health Care System, Inc

#### **BEAUFORT COUNTY**

Beaufort Memorial Hospital

#### **BERKELEY COUNTY**

Franklin C. Fetter Family Health Center  
Ernest & Kennedy Center

#### **CALHOUN COUNTY**

Family Health Center, Inc at St. Matthews  
J.T. Blanton Treatment Facility

#### **CHARLESTON COUNTY**

Bons Secours St. Francis Xavier Hospital  
Franklin C. Fetter Family Health Center  
Franklin C. Fetter Family Health Center  
MUSC Medical Center

#### **CHEROKEE COUNTY**

Novant Health Gaffney

#### **CHESTERFIELD COUNTY**

Care South Carolina (Cheraw)  
Care South Carolina (Chesterfield)  
Sandhills Medical Foundation - Jefferson  
Sandhills Medical Foundation - McBee

#### **CLARENDON COUNTY**

Black River Health Care, Inc (Manning)  
Clarendon Memorial Hospital

#### **COLLETON COUNTY**

Lowcountry AHEC

#### **DARLINGTON COUNTY**

Care South Carolina (Hartsville 1)  
Care South Carolina (Hartsville 2)  
Care South Carolina (Society Hill)  
Genesis Healthcare, Inc.  
Lamar Healthcare  
McLeod Medical Center - Darlington

#### **DILLON COUNTY**

Care South Carolina (Dillon)  
Care South Carolina (Lakeview)  
Care South Carolina (Latta)  
McLeod Medical - Dillon  
Trinity Behavioral Care

#### **DORCHESTER COUNTY**

Dorchester Counseling Services  
Family Health Centers, Inc at St. George  
Franklin C. Fetter Family Health Center

#### **EDGEFIELD COUNTY**

Edgefield County Hospital

#### **FAIRFIELD COUNTY**

Fairfield Behavioral Health Services  
Fairfield Memorial Hospital

#### **FLORENCE COUNTY**

Black River Health Care, Inc (Timmonsville)  
Hope Health - Admin  
Hope Health - Florence  
Hope Health - Lake City  
Hope Health - Pee Dee  
Olanta Family Care  
Pee Dee AHEC

#### **GEORGETOWN COUNTY**

Georgetown Memorial Hospital

#### **GREENVILLE COUNTY**

Greenville Memorial Medical Center  
New Horizon Family Health Center  
St. Francis Hospital  
Upstate AHEC

#### **GREENWOOD COUNTY**

Carolina Health Centers, Inc  
Carolina Health Centers, Inc  
Carolina Health Centers, Inc  
Carolina Health Centers, Inc  
Self Regional Healthcare  
The Bethany Center

#### **HORRY COUNTY**

Conway Hospital, Inc  
Loris Healthcare System  
Shoreline Behavioral Health Services  
Shoreline Behavioral Health Services  
Waccamaw Community Hospital

#### **KERSHAW COUNTY**

Kershaw County Medical Center

#### **LANCASTER COUNTY**

Mid-Carolina AHEC

#### **LAURENS COUNTY**

Carolina Health Centers, Inc  
Hometown Pediatrics  
Laurens Community Care Medical Home  
Laurens County Memorial Hospital

#### **LEE COUNTY**

Care South Carolina

#### **MCCORMICK COUNTY**

Carolina Health Centers, Inc

#### **MARION COUNTY**

Marion County Medical Center  
Trinity Behavioral Care

#### **MARLBORO COUNTY**

Care South Carolina, Inc  
Care South Carolina, Inc  
Care South Carolina, Inc  
Trinity Behavioral Care

#### **NEWBERRY COUNTY**

Newberry County Memorial Hospital

#### **OCONEE COUNTY**

Oconee Memorial Hospital

#### **ORANGEBURG COUNTY**

Family Health Center, Inc-Neeses  
Family Health Center, Inc -Norfield  
Family Health Center, Inc-Vance  
Family Health Center-Orangeburg  
Hope Health, Inc  
Medical Center of Santee, LLC  
Regional Medical Center  
Singleton Health Center, LLC  
Total Family Care  
William J. McCord Adolescent  
Treatment Facility

#### **PICKENS COUNTY**

Cannon Memorial Hospital

#### **RICHLAND COUNTY**

Genesis Health Care, Inc  
Palmetto Health Baptist  
Sisters of Charity Providence Hospitals

#### **SALUDA COUNTY**

Carolina Health Centers, Inc  
Saluda Family Practice

#### **SPARTANBURG COUNTY**

Spartanburg Regional Medical Center

#### **SUMTER COUNTY**

Pinewood Health Center  
Sandhills Medical Center  
Sumter Family Health Center  
Sumter Family Health Center  
Sumter Women's Health Center

#### **UNION COUNTY**

Union Hospital District  
Wallace Thomson Hospital

#### **WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY**

Kingstree Health Department  
Williamsburg Regional Hospital

### **GEORGIA**

#### **CLARKE COUNTY**

Athens Neighborhood Health Center - East

#### **HART COUNTY**

Anmed Hartwell Family Practice

#### **JACKSON COUNTY**

Athens Neighborhood Health Center - West

#### **JEFFERSON COUNTY**

Medical Associates Plus

#### **RICHMOND COUNTY**

Christ Community Health Services-Augusta  
Christ Community Health Services-Augusta  
Medical Associates Plus-Wrens  
Medical Associates Plus Epic Health-Augusta  
University Health Services

**SITES ADDED IN 2016 ARE COLORED IN RED.**

# BROADBAND

**Palmetto Care Connections sent a satisfaction survey based on a 5 point scale to all providers/sites in the PSPN Network.**

## *Survey Says...*

**PSPN**  
**SC**

*Reliability*

4.7

*Billing Process*

4.3

*Network Latency*

4.2

*Support Response Times*

4.2

*Overall Satisfaction* 4.2



Leon Brunson  
Family Health Centers, Inc.  
Chief Executive Officer

“Approximately, a year ago Family Health Centers (FHC), Inc. embarked on an ambitious goal to redesign and implement a brand new state-of-the-art network infrastructure which would improve network response time, agility, efficiency, reliability, availability, security, and support for better collaborations of applications between customers and other health care providers. Funding for these initiatives was provided via the Universal Services Administrative Company (USAC). Special thanks to Matt and Kathy for making the process of accessing these funds seamless. PCC handled all the paperwork requirements and ensured that all the regulatory requirements were met. Finally, once the infrastructure was put in place, PCC was instrumental in helping us implement our current Telehealth initiative by providing equipment and facilitating support with the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) to provide specialist services to our patients via telehealth.

Thanks PCC, for all that you do. I look forward to continue working with you on other initiatives.”

# BROADBAND

## Partnership with Health Connect Network, a Broadband Consortium based in Maine

Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) has developed a partnership with a large Broadband Consortium, Health Connect Network, located in Bangor, Maine. This partnership will allow PCC to provide additional benefits to the PSPN members. When PSPN was started back in 2009 with the leadership of MUSC, Spirit was awarded a 10 year Evergreen contract. This means that PCC is able to assist health care providers in obtaining the FCC's 65% subsidy if and only if they use Spirit as their carrier. Although the contract with Spirit has helped many health care providers in South Carolina, it does place limitations on working with providers who are in existing contracts with other carriers, such as AT&T, Time Warner, Frontier, etc. For each non-Spirit circuit that PCC tries to qualify under PSPN, a new RFP must be approved by USAC and distributed to the public. Along with a new RFP, a very detailed network design must also be submitted for each individual circuit. This process is very labor intense and will be difficult for PCC to tackle on its own with current staffing. Through this new partnership with HCN, PCC will now be able to offer these services to any eligible health care provider in SC and neighboring states. HCN will be responsible for paperwork on the back end including all RFPs and network designs. HCN will also be responsible for billing the site and USAC for the full 100% of the total cost. PCC will continue to market the PSPN Consortium and identify health care providers that are eligible for the USAC subsidy and HCN will provide the bulk of the administrative work for these providers. PCC and HCN will split any fees received as a result of this new partnership. This partnership will also allow PCC a three year time period in which to learn how to conduct these new tasks and eventually have the capacity to bring it back in-house. Conservative estimates for this partnership show that PCC could possibly net anywhere from \$60,000/year to more than \$100,000/year. Besides financially helping PCC, this partnership will bring tremendous value/benefit to the health care providers in South Carolina.



**Jim Rogers**  
President  
Health Connect Networks



# BROADBAND

## Contract with SCORH to Expand Telehealth Services in the Rural Communities in SC and Expand PSPN Consortium

Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) entered into a contract with SC Office of Rural Health (SCORH) in June 2016 for the purpose of:

- Educating rural health care providers on the benefits, efficiencies and value achieved from incorporating telehealth into their day to day operations as a means to increase access to care for rural patients. Such activities may include training on the use of telehealth technologies as assessing usage patterns and needs.
- Educating rural health care providers on the benefits and value of becoming a member of a HIPAA compliant, statewide broadband consortium comprised of only health care organizations. Such activities might include the development of policies and procedures for telehealth services, reimbursement guidance and implementation assistance
- Educating administration, school nurses, faculty and parents at South Carolina schools (K-12) on benefit/value of adding telehealth as a service for their students to improve access to primary care services, reduce absenteeism. And reduce unnecessary emergency department visits
- Promote use of telehealth services in the SCORH weekly e-newsletter and annual conference
- Provide marketing expertise for the purpose of promoting telehealth and the need for dedicated bandwidth

PCC satisfactorily met the objectives given by SCORH from June 2016-December 2016. The financial revenues from this contract have netted PCC approximately \$95,000 through the third quarter of 2016 with an expected additional \$70,000 to be paid in February 2017 for services rendered in the last quarter of 2016. This contract will continue in 2017 with projected increased revenues!

South Carolina Office of  
Rural Health 

# TECHNOLOGY



Palmetto Health received a USDA grant which allows them to partner with Richland School District I for the purpose of developing a telehealth pilot program in 4 schools in Lower Richland County, South Carolina to provide educational services to residents in the communities. Residents in these target areas face health care shortages and experience high rates of chronic disease yet have fewer resources, such as income and insurance in order to obtain care and improve their health. Palmetto Health has determined that with such diseases as Obesity and Diabetes being prevalent in these communities, these chronic disease related co-morbidities can be mitigated and sometimes significantly reduced in individuals with proper self-management. Palmetto Health's proven programs and services will be delivered in the heart of these rural communities through the schools. Palmetto Health will also provide health care services to these schools. Palmetto Health has contracted with Palmetto Care Connections for technical support for this program.

PCC will provide the following support services:

- Coordinate equipment installation at the schools
- Coordinate equipment installation for this project at Palmetto Health
- Provide on-site training
- Schedule quarterly site visits to ensure proper functionality
- Coordinate monthly check-in calls for participants



# TECHNOLOGY



Palmetto Care Connections is responsible for installing, configuring and providing support and maintenance to all of the Behavioral Health Service Centers in the state which total 32 locations. Through the PSPN infrastructure and a specific provisioning server from Polycom, Palmetto Care Connections will be able to provide remote support to all of these locations.

*Cornerstone - Abbeville  
New Life Center - Allendale  
Tri-County Commission--Bamberg  
Axis I  
Ernest E. Kennedy Center  
Tri-County Commission--St. Matthews  
Charleston Center  
Hazel Pittman Center  
The ALPHA Behavioral Health Center - Chesterfield  
Clarendon Behavioral Health Services  
Colleton County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission  
Rubicon Family Counseling Services  
Trinity Behavioral Care - Dillon  
Dorchester Alcohol and Drug Commission  
Cornerstone - Edgefield  
Fairfield Behavioral Health Services  
Circle Park Behavioral Health Services  
Georgetown County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission  
The Phoenix Center*

*New Life Center - Hampton  
Shoreline Behavioral Health Services  
New Life Center - Jasper  
The ALPHA Behavioral Health Center - Camden  
Counseling Services of Lancaster  
GateWay Counseling Center  
The ALPHA Behavioral Health Center  
Trinity Behavioral Care - Marion  
Trinity Behavioral Care - Bennettsville  
Cornerstone - McCormick  
Tri-County Commission-Orangeburg  
BHS of Pickens County  
LRADAC  
Westview BHS - Saluda (formerly Saluda Behavioral Health System)  
The Forrester Center for Behavioral Health  
Union County Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse  
Williamsburg County Department on Alcohol and Drug Abuse  
Keystone Substance Abuse Services*

# TECHNOLOGY



The Florence County Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse Center dba Circle Park Behavioral Health Services, was awarded a 2016 USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant in the amount of \$155,926 for the purpose of creating a telehealth network among all of the Behavioral Health Service Sites (formerly called SC Department of Alcohol and other Drug Abuse Substances Service Centers) locations in an effort to improve efficiencies. The funding will allow for two way videoconferencing equipment to be placed at each location as well upgrades in capacity for scheduling and bridging capabilities through their partnership with the Palmetto State providers network (PSPN). SCTA committed to a \$162,292 match to bring the grant total to \$318,218. This commitment of more than 100% made this grant application very competitive. PCC assisted in the planning and development of this grant application. PCC is also responsible for deploying and configuring all of the telehealth carts as well as train the staff at each DAODAS site on how to use the technology. Once the telehealth equipment has been installed and all DAODAS sites are connected, PCC will provide maintenance and support to the each location on an ongoing basis. PCC will be reimbursed \$36,000 for these services through the grant. These funds will be used to hire additional technical assistance and for travel costs.

Submitted the 2017 ORHP Network Development Grant for the purpose of connecting the 23 rural offices of the South Carolina Behavioral Health Service Sites (BHS) with primary care providers in a variety of settings for the provision of substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and primary care and also connecting them to the schools. We will look to achieve efficiencies through the integration of behavioral health in the primary care setting and the integration of primary care into behavioral health settings. Through these telehealth services, PCC and BHS look to reduce opioid addiction in SC and improve mental health services which will create a positive change in population health. This grant will provide \$300,000/year for 3 years.

# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



Palmetto Care Connections works with Low Country Area Health Education Consortium (LCAHEC) and the Carolina Centers for Medical Education (CCME) to offer a tele-diabetic education program that is available in Fairfax and Barnwell counties at the federally qualified health center, Low Country Health Care System.

## Tele-Diabetic Education Program

- **82** people referred to our DSME classes since April
- **60** of these attended at least 1 class
- **50** of these graduated with 4+ classes attended
- **Graduation Rate 61%**

“Having the opportunity to provide Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) classes to more areas of South Carolina has been very positive for me as the instructor and for those participating in the classes. Without the DSME classes via Telehealth, I would not have been able to provide this service to the rural areas of the state. All of the participants have stated that they would recommend this format to others in need of the education for diabetes or prediabetes. The participants are able to attend classes in their communities, thus, saving them time and expense. This has also saved me many hours of driving time and travel expense going to the distance sites.”

--Sarah P. Smith, MAT, RD, LD, CDE, Quality Specialist, Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence



# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



Palmetto Care Connections was awarded a 2016 USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant for the purpose of connecting 19 schools in Allendale, Bamberg and Barnwell counties with their local health care providers (Awardees listed to the right). Healthcare providers at Bamberg Family Practice (a rural health clinic) will serve all of the schools in Bamberg County while Low Country Health Care System (a FQHC) will serve all schools in Barnwell and Allendale counties. MUSC will serve as the back-up provider for all of these schools. PCC will utilize the proven school based telehealth model currently utilized by MUSC when connecting with other schools across the state. SCTA committed to a \$158,215 match to bring the grant total to \$316,004. This commitment of more than 100% made this grant application very competitive.

## Bamberg School District 1

Richard Carroll Elementary School  
Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School  
Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School

## Bamberg School District 2

Denmark-Olar Elementary School  
Denmark-Olar Middle School  
Denmark-Olar High School

## Allendale County Schools

Fairfax Elementary School  
Allendale Elementary School  
Allendale-Fairfax Middle School  
Allendale-Fairfax High School

## Williston School District

Kelly Edwards Elementary School  
Williston-Elko Middle School  
Williston-Elko High School

## Barnwell School District

Barnwell Primary School  
Barnwell Elementary School  
Guinyard-Butler Middle School  
Barnwell High School

## Barnwell School District 19

Macedonia Elementary School  
Blackville-Hilda Junior High School  
Blackville-Hilda High School

# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



South Carolina Office of  
Rural Health



Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) partnered with the South Carolina Office of Rural Health to implement the Veterans Affairs Flex Grant. PCC will receive \$40,000 for its assistance with the implementation of this program. South Carolina ranks 7th in the nation for its Veteran to civilian population rate of 8.53%, and the VA's capacity to provide timely outpatient primary health care to SC's Veterans has been outpaced by the significant growth and need of its Veteran population in the state, especially in rural communities. Rural Veterans face additional barriers based on proximity to appropriate behavioral health care services within the VA system and their current need for behavioral health care provision mirrors, and in many cases, surpasses the unmet needs of rural non-Veterans. Veterans in SC have a high incidence of reported behavioral/mental health conditions. Data from the 2012 National Council for Behavioral Health report states that of the 48,556 SC Veterans from either Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) or Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), close to 9,000 were diagnosed with PTSD and Major Depression, while another 4,222 were projected as being "unserved" for these care needs. The need for behavioral healthcare diagnoses and services within this population continues to be critical, especially relative to the treatment needs for PTSD and other "signature injuries" experienced by Veterans. The focus of the project will be to improve access to those rural Veterans who have a primary care medical home and established relationship with a rural primary care provider in a non-VA setting. The vehicle within the non-VA care realm to connect Veterans' care reimbursement at the Medicare rate will be provider enrollment in the Veterans Choice program. SC RAVHR will impact rural Veterans' behavioral health care access, coordination and delivery state-wide with a total impact of 10% of those 4,222 Veterans meeting the "unserved" criteria for PTSD. Therefore through SC RAVHR 422 rural Veterans will be evaluated for PTSD or PTSD and TBI and will be referred for Johnson VAMC-delivered home-based tele-psychotherapy as appropriate during the three year project period. The primary purpose of this partnership is to develop an effective system whereby specialty providers at the Johnson VAMC provide training to non-VA rural Primary Care Physicians ("Rural Community Physicians") to appropriately screen for PTSD or PTSD and TBI, which will be facilitated by linkage with Palmetto Care Connections, SC's rural-based telehealth network. This model will be developed with guidance from Dr. Divya Ahuja, clinical faculty at USC School of Medicine and Regional Director for the the Tri-State Telehealth Advancement Network (TITAN) Project. The TITAN project enhances the HIV capacity of primary care providers in rural and underserved areas in SC, GA, and NC, caring for fewer than 25 HIV patients. The model is based on technology-based education and consultative support from a multidisciplinary team. Dr. Ahuja will assist Palmetto Care Connections and the Johnson VAMC in development of a model that will provide didactic, skills building, clinical consultation, and technical assistance to aid rural non-VA primary care providers in recognizing and addressing signs and symptoms

# EDUCATION

**Monthly  
E- Newsletter**

**60% SUBSCRIBER INCREASE**

It's easy to join our mailing list!

Just send your email address by text message:

Text  
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# EDUCATION

## ANNUAL TELEHEALTH SUMMIT

Palmetto Care Connections rescheduled its 5th Annual Telehealth Summit of SC due to SC Governor's declaration of a state of emergency during Hurricane Matthew. Attendees of this event typically include physicians, nurses, program managers and coordinators, social workers, legal advisors, IT specialists, financial managers, administrators, and more.



**Save the Date**

*5<sup>th</sup> Annual Telehealth  
Summit of SC*

**March 28-30,  
2017**

Columbia Metropolitan Convention  
Center  
Columbia, SC

[www.palmettocareconnections.org](http://www.palmettocareconnections.org)



### Planning Committee

Richard Foster, MD  
Christianna Novakovic, MHA  
Divya Ahuja, MD  
Kathy Schwarting, MHA  
Adrena Harrison, RN, MSN  
Ragan Dubose-Morris, PhD  
Ed Spencer, M.Ed., MSW  
Rena Brewer  
Shawn Valenta, MHA  
Jim Allen, MSW, MPH  
Amanda Cotter  
Davia Smith, MHA  
Kojo Danquah-Duah  
Trayce Shanks, RN  
Diana Caron, MEd, BHS, RN

SC Hospital Association  
Greenville Health System  
USC School of Medicine  
Palmetto Care Connections  
USC School of Medicine  
SC Area Health Education Consortium  
SC Department of Mental Health  
Georgia Partnership for Telehealth  
Medical University of South Carolina  
Palmetto Care Connections  
Palmetto Health  
Palmetto Care Connections  
USC School of Medicine  
Palmetto Care Connections  
Lowcountry AHEC

# ADVOCACY

## TELEPSYCHIATRY OUTCOMES

**53%** *Reduction in Emergency Departments (ED) Lengths of Stay (LOS), per USC School of Medicine*

CY 2015: **31%** *of Patients Recommended for Release (Discharge) Same Day of Consultation*

Telepsychiatry patients had **lower rates** of inpatient admission after 30 days (8% vs 19%)

Telepsychiatry patients had **shorter lengths** of stay (4.1 days vs 6.2 days inpatient)

Telepsychiatry patients were **less likely** to be admitted to the hospital (8% vs 16%)

Telepsychiatry patients were **more likely** to receive 30 days followup care (38% vs 13%)

Telepsychiatry patients were **more likely** to received 90 day followup care (46% vs 17%)

***Inpatient hospital charge savings (\$5209 vs \$8529) = \$3320***



**DMH** South Carolina  
Department of  
Mental Health

PCC worked with the SC Department of Mental Health and the SCTA in 2016 to expand the DMH Tele-psychiatry program into additional rural hospitals. PCC assisted in the contract negotiations between DMH and SCTA in 2016. In the end it was determined that SCTA would purchase telehealth carts to be placed in the emergency departments at 7 rural hospitals who have never utilized this service before which means greater access to care for residents in the communities of Newberry, Allendale, Edgefield, Lake City, Lancaster, Pickens and Greer. SCTA agreed to pay the salary for 1 additional Psychiatrist to serve on the DMH staff and support the additional hospitals utilizing this service as well as assist in paying the annual DMH charges for providing these services.

### Hospitals That Received Replacement Carts:

Wallace Thomson Hospital  
Williamsburg Regional Hospital  
Springs Memorial  
Fairfield Memorial Hospital  
Tidelands Georgetown Hospital  
Tidelands Waccamaw Hospital  
Palmetto Health Baptist Easley  
Laurens County Hospital  
Hampton Regional Medical Center  
Clarendon Memorial Hospital McLeod  
Carolinas Health System  
McLeod  
McLeod Dillon



*"PCC continues to be a major instrument is assisting DMH to increase mental health telepsychiatry service access through productive collaboration and connectivity with other key players in the successful SC Telehealth development arena. As such, PCC represents an active and dedicated linkage between interested agencies within SC and those throughout the nation."*

*-Ed Spencer, M.Ed., MSW, Director, Division of Clinical & Community Innovation, Columbia Area Mental Health Center*

# ADVOCACY

## VOICE FOR RURAL/UNDERSERVED PROVIDERS



The Executive Director of PCC was asked to join the Board of Directors for Low Country Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC) in an effort to promote telehealth in the Low Country of South Carolina.



The Executive Director of PCC was asked to join the Board of Directors for the South Carolina Health Information Exchange (SCHIEEx) in an effort to bridge the gap between the statewide health exchange and telehealth providers.



Palmetto Care Connections served as an Exhibitor at several Health Care Conferences in South Carolina and around the country. The purpose is to educate providers and health care professionals about telehealth and the benefit in utilizing it as a means to improve access to care. PCC also takes the opportunity to educate these same providers and professionals on the PSPN Broadband Consortium, the importance of adequate bandwidth when using telehealth and how providers can access subsidies for these costs. PCC served as an Exhibitor at the following events:

- 20th Annual South Carolina Rural Health Conference
- Annual South Carolina Primary Health Care Association Conference
- Annual South Carolina Chapter of American Academy of Family Practitioners Conference
- South Carolina Medical Group Management Association
- South Carolina Medical Association
- Annual South Carolina Behavioral Health Association Conference

PCC was also invited to present on telehealth and its benefits at several conferences around South Carolina and in the Southeast. PCC provided telehealth presentations at the following events:

- Annual South Carolina Primary Health Care Association Conference
- Annual South Carolina Behavioral Health Association Conference
- Annual South Carolina Chapter of American Academy of Family Practitioners Conference
- Annual Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center Conference
- Annual South Carolina Business Coalition on Health Conference
- Annual South Carolina Association of Medical Staff Services
- Orangeburg Rotary Club
- The Duke Endowment Small & Rural Hospital Conference
- Quarterly Meeting of Medical Directors of Managed Care Organizations
- South Carolina HIMSS Meeting
- South Carolina Hospital Association's Small & Rural Hospital Council

## TELEHEALTH REIMBURSEMENT

Palmetto Care Connections partnered with the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance to develop the first Payer Workgroup in South Carolina. Palmetto Care Connections participated in the SCTA Payer Workgroup discussion about expanding telehealth reimbursements. Payers, providers and other health care organizations were represented to discuss future telehealth reimbursement opportunities and best practices for achieving them.

Covered topics included:

- The state of telehealth reimbursements in South Carolina
- Covered places of service
- Covered types of providers
- Covered tele-clinical services
- Value-based reimbursement opportunities
- Continued engagement

Initial Payer Recommendations:

- Private Payers: Mirror SC DHHS Medicaid's coverage of schools as a covered site by adding schools as a covered place of service in telehealth policies
- All: Expand the list of eligible, reimbursable providers to include nurse practitioners, clinical psychologist and registered dietitians
- Medicaid: Increase the facility fee reimbursement to a more equitable amount
- Medicare: Prevent geographical barriers in telehealth insurance coverage

