

House Committee on Health and Human Services
Chairman Hawkins and Committee Members
February 1, 2018

Mr. Chairman and Committee members-
Written only- Proponent HB 2512

We are the Kansas Health Care Association and Kansas Center for Assisted Living, a trade association with a membership of nursing homes, assisted living, residential health care, home plus, and nursing facilities for mental health. We are the oldest and largest nursing home trade association in Kansas. Our members care for nearly 20,000 elders across the state each and every day.

The challenge of the delivery in healthcare especially in rural settings is becoming increasingly more difficult especially for more specialized care.

Telemedicine programs have been designed to help professional health care providers provide quality care for their patients. Telemedicine is not a separate medical specialty. In skilled nursing and assisted living settings, telemedicine is more commonly associated with video consultations for patients and homes in rural settings. Currently, homes are using telemedicine to manage acute changes of condition, chronic disease management, wound care, family/patient conferences, and staff education, as well as specialist consultations with psychiatrists, neurologists, and other practitioners.

Here are a few examples of the benefits of implementation.

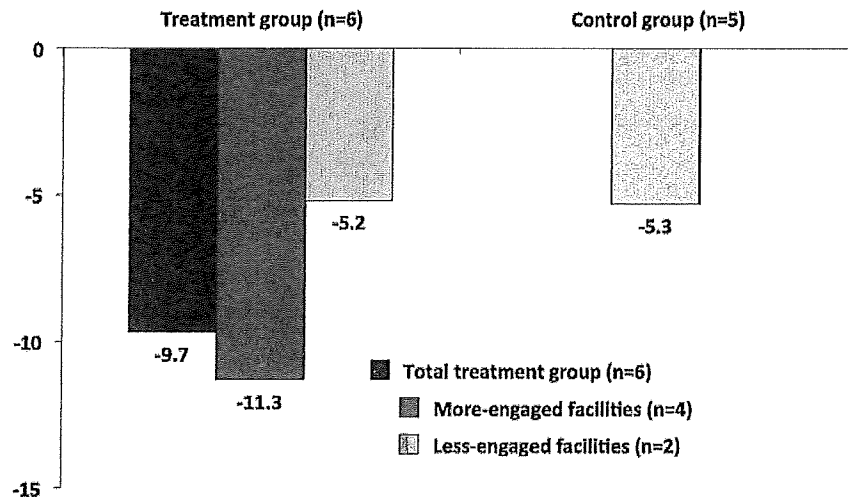
1. **An ability to provide specialized care.** This keeps the residents in the community and the issues around travel have been eliminated. The issues around taking residents to the doctor or for other services can be time consuming and expensive. I know we have Kansas providers who are taking advantage of some psych services through the telemedicine route.
2. **Advantage in a very competitive market.** Residents and families appreciate the innovative options.
3. **Increased savings.** While doing research for this testimony, Lutheran Senior Services reported with the use of an on-site telehealth kiosk and weekly nurse consults, they have cut resident re-hospitalizations by one-third, reduced resident moves to a higher level of care by 11% and decreased resident turnover by 6% at affordable housing properties operated by the company.
4. **Everyone being more knowledgeable about their vital signs and the importance of healthy signs.**

We have a well-established tele-health program in Kansas through KU Medical Center. That program has shown success in keeping down hospitalizations and also keeping people out of other acute settings.

Of course, traditionally, reimbursement for telemedicine in long term care was only eligible in the rural settings. We need to remove any barriers between tele-health that exist in the Medicaid world and private insurance market in Kansas.

Decrease in Nursing Homes' Hospitalization Rates in More-Engaged and Less-Engaged Facilities After Introduction of Telemedicine

Percent decrease in hospitalizations per 1,000 resident days



Source: Adapted from D. C. Grabowski and A. J. O'Malley, "Use of Telemedicine Can Reduce Hospitalization of Nursing Home Residents and Generate Savings for Medicare," *Health Affairs*, Feb. 2014 33(2):244-50.

News Links:

Covenant Health adds telemedicine services at 4 skilled nursing facilities:

<http://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/covenant-health-adds-telemedicine-services-4-skilled-nursing-facilities>

Lexington Health Network named Innovator of the Year:

<http://www.mcknights.com/lexington-health-network-named-innovator-of-the-year/printarticle/698739/>

Health Monitoring reduces hospitalizations, turnover of affordable housing residents:

<http://www.mcknightseniorliving.com/health-monitoring-reduces-hospitalizations-turnover-of-affordable-housing-residents/printarticle/700011/>

New Connections Speed Up Care:

http://www.providermagazine.com/archives/2016_Archives/Pages/0616/New-Connections-Speed-Up-Care.aspx?PF=1

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