

# Transforming Healthcare



## TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE

High-speed connectivity, or broadband, has the potential to transform healthcare across Missouri, including:

- the ability for transmission and interpretation of large files in real-time, even remotely -- MRI, ultrasound and X-rays;
- real-time data exchanged from devices worn by the patient, allowing more comprehensive health monitoring, particularly chronic conditions;
- enabling Missouri's 'baby boomers' to "age in place" with access to quality care from wherever they live, lowering costs and trauma associated with moving to assisted living or nursing facilities;
- assisting medical personnel administering care more effectively when seconds count, giving access to crucial information to local providers, potentially lowering the number of patients who require transport to larger hospitals.

### FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

The FCC's National Broadband Plan includes goals for our healthcare system. These goals serve as a starting point for regional discussions about the best way to deliver and use broadband technology to transform healthcare. The Plan's recommendations include:

*"HOSPITALS, CLINICS AND PHYSICIANS DELIVER QUALITY CARE ON A DAILY BASIS. BUT THEY ARE FACED WITH AN AGING POPULATION, RISING HEALTH CARE COSTS AND MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WITH NO HEALTHCARE COVERAGE AT ALL. BROADBAND CAN NOT ONLY HELP CUT COSTS, IT CAN IMPROVE ACCESS TO OUR NATION'S WORLD-CLASS HEALTH CARE RESOURCES DESPITE THE CHALLENGES OF DISTANCE AND DISPARITY IN RESOURCES."*

***Ensure all healthcare providers have access to affordable broadband, by revamping the Rural Health Care Program***

More often than not, consumer broadband infrastructure is too expensive or inadequate for rural clinics and small physician offices. The National Broadband Plan outlines major changes to the FCC's Rural Health Care Program to better use authorized funding of \$100 million annually to help meet these challenges. The plan includes calls for assisting healthcare providers in purchasing broadband services and expanding the program to more institutions.

***Create economic incentives for broader health IT adoption and innovation***

There is a need to implement reimbursement and other economic incentives to help providers adopt broadband and help to close the health IT gap. The National Broadband Plan highlights investments

### MOBROADBANDNOW INITIATIVE

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that Congress and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are making to incentivize the adoption of e-records (electronic health records), and supports a similar approach for implementation of e-care technologies.

**Unlock the power of healthcare data and advanced analytics, while protecting privacy**

E-records (electronic health records) are a goldmine of useful data, with the potential to transform medicine -- if patient privacy is fully protected. The National Broadband Plan supports further development of cross-platform and data access, offering suggestions for ongoing actions by the government to enable this development.

**Modernize rules to increase access to e-care**

The National Broadband Plan suggests increasing implementation of e-care technologies by adjusting

standards - licensing, privileging, and credentialing - which currently erect barriers to medical professionals abilities to practice medicine remotely and across state lines.

**How can Broadband Transform Healthcare in my area?**

Several other factors need to be considered along with implementing

*“TELEMEDICINE AND TELEHEALTH HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO REVOLUTIONIZE HEALTHCARE IN RURAL AMERICA BY ALLOWING RURAL PROVIDERS AND PATIENTS THE OPPORTUNITY OF ACCESS TO SPECIALISTS, RETRIEVAL OF HEALTH RECORDS, IMPROVED EMERGENCY RESPONSE, REDUCING TRANSPORTATION COSTS, OFFERING NEW ALTERNATIVES FOR HOME HEALTH AND E-VISITS, AND CONNECTING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO THEIR PATIENTS IN REAL TIME.”*

broadband technology. Are the right tools in place for healthcare providers to leverage broadband? Do current processes and procedures allow enough room for use of broadband? Is everyone properly trained to use the technology effectively?

*MoBroadbandNow*, a five-year initiative launched by Gov. Nixon in 2009, coordinates efforts to obtain funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Commerce specifically set aside for broadband expansion. *MoBroadbandNow* seeks to expand broadband accessibility to 95 percent of the total population, a significant increase from the current projected accessibility of 79.7 percent.

One approved project involves Blue-Bird Media. As part of the Northern Missouri Ultra-High Capacity Middle Mile Project, BlueBird Media plans to empower healthcare institutions to implement regional health information exchanges and encourage adoption of telehealth, in addition to advanced medical imaging and medical collaboration in rural areas. Telehealth would also play a role in enabling regional correctional facilities to reduce expensive inmate transport and reduce security risks.

*MoBroadbandNow* can provide education, awareness, and facilitate communication of funding opportunities for healthcare.

But, we also need to have a fuller understanding of how healthcare providers would like to use broadband, and what are the challenges to integration?

Please share your stories with us at: <http://transform.mo.gov/broadband/>

Follow us on Twitter -- @MoBroadbandNow -- to stay up to speed on broadband news.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ABOUT HEALTHCARE AND BROADBAND**

1. Are the right tools in place for healthcare providers to leverage broadband? If yes, what tools are in place? If not, what hardware, software and other equipment do you need? Can you provide examples of how it would improve today's healthcare industry?
2. Do current processes and procedures encourage the use of broadband? What could you do differently with broadband that would promote its use in the healthcare industry?
3. Is everyone properly trained to use broadband technology effectively? How can we better prepare the healthcare workforce to utilize broadband to its maximum benefit?
4. Does broadband access and availability meet minimum standards for effective telehealth applications? If yes, how? If not, what are the locations that need broadband enhancements and the challenges in getting it there?
5. Is broadband technology cost prohibitive? If so, what are some cost-saving measures that could be implemented to increase use?