“People are Struggling in This Area”

Formative Audience Research to Develop a Rural Telehealth Intervention

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Public Health Problem

- Rural populations possess healthcare barriers
  - Report poor health status
- South Carolina
  - 41st for patient access to health care
  - All but one county designated health care professional shortage area
Background

Promise of Telehealth

• Addresses barriers to health
  • Travel distance
  • Cost
  • Shortage of health care providers
• Provides high levels of patient-provider satisfaction
• Recommended by ACOG to address health disparities
Purpose

Formative Audience Research

- Little current research
- Understand attitudes toward telemedicine
- Improve understanding of values, needs, and opinions
- Improve health and health care access
Qualitative Methodology

- 52 In-depth Interviews (1hr)
- Women ages 18-44 (mean age: 32.4) living five rural counties of South Carolina; Allendale, Beaufort, Colleton, Jasper, & Hampton
- Flyers, social media, word-of-mouth (churches, libraries)
- $25 Incentive
- HyperRESEARCH 3.5.2, a qualitative data analysis software
Demographics

- Black: 59%
- White: 33%
- Latino: 2%
- Other: 6%
Relationship-Centered Care

**Health care provider credibility**

“As long as the staff is qualified, medical wise. Qualified staff is really what you look for.”

**Patient-provider communication**

“Just doctors that are really down-to-earth and can communicate with their patient. I don’t want to feel judged regardless of why I go to a doctor’s office.”
Results

Importance of Confidentiality

Seeing someone you know

“Definitely confidentiality because in a lot of the cases, in a small town like this, everybody knows everybody.”

Privacy

“Privacy. Because of the fact you’re going to a community center, you don’t have office where you can sit and see a doctor or talk.”

“None of my personal information getting out somewhere else, or there is a glitch and someone is recording....”
Benefits of Telemedicine

Cost

“And what it does is you don’t have to pay all that money versus going into a doctor’s office. You save on gas and all that...”

No waiting (for an appointment)

“...with Medicaid and make an appointment they get booked up quick, but you could just go to the center.”

Transportation

“The closer the better, especially from where we live, gas and transportation is always an issue. So having some place closer would be great.”
Implications

Conclusions

• Telemedicine would benefit the community
• Address barriers to health
  • Cost
  • Transportation
  • Overcrowding of health care facilities
• Convenient, accessible, and affordable