NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR OLDER ADULT PARTICIPATION IN TELEHEALTH VISITS

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BACKGROUND

- RiverStone Health (RSH), a FQHC, is a community health center located in Billings, MT, with three rural satellite clinics.
  - Based in the Yellowstone City-County Health Department
  - Full service clinic serving 20,000 patients a year
  - Home of the Montana Family Medicine Residency, Eastern Montana Area Health Education Center

- The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated initiation of telehealth visits between patients and providers for the safety and convenience of both parties.

- RSH had not performed telehealth visits prior to spring 2020.

- As the pandemic developed, a needs assessment was performed to determine the interest and needs of older adult patients to engage in telehealth.
METHODS

- RSH identified 1,140 patients age 65 or older, 817 (72%) in the main clinic and 323 (28%) in rural clinics.

- A 13-question survey was devised with a goal of completing it with 300 patients by phone in fall 2020.

- 716 calls produced 303 completed surveys, 257 (85%) from the main clinic and 46 (15%) from rural clinics.

- Six individuals made calls, recording the responses in a data base.

- Questions included
  - interest in telehealth
  - capability to participate
  - need for training and equipment
  - interest in Zoom sessions for education and socialization
RESULTS

• Ten percent of patients surveyed had completed a telehealth visit and 41% were interested in doing so.
• Capability to participate in a visit included having internet access (35%) and either a computer (25%) or an iPad (29%).
• While 20% had participated in communication via an electronic platform (Skype, FaceTime or Zoom), 18% felt they would need training to participate in telehealth visits.
• Similarly, 18% indicated that they had someone to assist with such as visit, but 14% thought a close family member would need training.
• Approximately 14% were interested in the loan of an iPad.
• Interest in Zoom sessions for socialization (14%) and education (17%) was also determined.
CONCLUSIONS

- The percentages obtained in this survey were extrapolated to the 1,140 clinic patients age 65 and older.
  - Almost 500 clinic patients would be interested in a telehealth visit.
  - Up to 160 patients would need the loan of an iPad.
- When a patient indicates interest in a telehealth visit and needs an equipment loan, this information is noted in the EMR for future visits.
- With funding from the CARES Act, RSH has been able to purchase 10 iPads and develop a process for distribution as well as an infection control procedure for cleaning them between uses.
- When a visit is scheduled, the Geriatric Educator and the Zoom tech equip the patient with an iPad and teach him/her to use it.
- The Zoom champion takes the patient through a practice session prior to the appointment.
- The day of the appointment, the Zoom tech gets the patient started on Zoom and hands him/her off to the Medical Assistant for the visit.
- RSH is also planning to follow up with those patients interested in Zoom sessions for education or socialization.