Connect to Care

A Telecommunications Project of CAMC Health Education and Research Institute In Collaboration with the West Virginia Perinatal Partnership
Description of Connect to care

*Connect to Care* is a perinatal telecommunications project linking rural health facilities with specialists at tertiary perinatal care centers in West Virginia. Live telecommunications allows high risk pregnant women and infants and their local health care providers to obtain important medical consultations. In some cases this eliminates the need to travel long distances for specialist care. *Connect to Care* also allows for medical and nursing education and networking at the rural sites.

*Connect to Care* is a project of CAMC Health Education and Research Institute in Collaboration with the West Virginia Perinatal Partnership. The *West Virginia Perinatal Partnership* is a project of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences and is managed by the West Virginia Community Voices, Inc. The WV Perinatal Partnership began in 2006 as a statewide collaboration of health care professionals and organizations working to improve the health of pregnant women and newborns in West Virginia. The Perinatal Partnership formed a telecommunications committee in 2008 and plans were made to seek funding for a projects modeled on the A.N.G.E.L.S. Program at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Funding was received in 2009.

Each of the colored sites shown is now equipped with telemedicine equipment reserved for perinatal consults.
West Virginia Perinatal Telehealth Project

**WV Perinatal Telehealth Project Description.** Working with the West Virginia Perinatal Partnership, CAMC Institute designed and developed a statewide Perinatal Telehealth Program. The Program provided rural health care sites with the equipment and training to link their organizations (and obstetricians, nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, nurses, pregnant women and their families) with tertiary care centers (and perinatologists). This project makes it possible for high risk pregnant women and their health care providers to receive perinatal consultation services, education and obstetrical referrals without leaving their rural providers. The project allows high risk newborn in rural hospitals and clinics to receive consultations with specialists at centers that are many miles away.

**Project Funding:**
- Department of Agriculture; Rural Urban Systems Grant
- Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
- West Virginia Health Care Authority
- Matching funds from participating Sites

**Original Participating Sites**

**Rural Hospitals:**
- Davis Memorial Hospital
- Grant Memorial Hospital
- Preston Memorial Hospital
- Roane General Hospital
- Stonewall General Hospital
- Summersville Memorial Hospital
- Williamson Memorial Hospital
- Greenbrier Valley Medical Center
- St. Joseph’s Hospital - Buckhannon

**Primary Care Centers:**
- Community Health Foundation of Man
- Lincoln Primary Care Center
- Primary Care Systems – Clay County
- Roane Co. Family Health Care
- Valley Health Systems – Fort Gay
- Valley Health Systems – Wayne
- Valley Health – Mill Creek
- Family Care – Madison

**Changes in Original Participating Sites:**
- Preston Memorial Hospital stopped providing obstetric and newborn services but kept equipment to use for other specialties.
- Primary Care Systems – Clay County stopped providing prenatal care but kept equipment to use for other specialties.
- Roane General Hospital stopped providing obstetric and newborn service but kept equipment to use for other specialties.
- Valley Health – Mill Creek stopped providing prenatal care and transferred the equipment to one of the clinics other sites in Elkins.
Measurable Goals & Specific Outcomes:

- **17 rural healthcare sites** will have access to obstetric/perinatal care via telemedicine consults for the first time.
- Pregnant mothers located in **14 rural counties** will receive better and more frequent care due to greater accessibility of healthcare.
- **353,250 rural county residents** will realize additional benefits from this project through access to the videoconferencing equipment provided in their local areas. This equipment will provide access to general healthcare consults, healthcare education, first aid and basic healthcare training for local responders, communication and information gathering sessions with a variety of social service organizations, etc.

**Project Update:** March, 2010 - May 2013

1. **Site visits to rural and tertiary sites** conducted by representatives from the WV Perinatal Partnership and CAMC Institute conducted during the spring, summer, fall of 2011 and 2012.

2. **Financial Considerations:** Documentation necessary to meet USDA requirements for “match” were prepared and processed for approval; this was necessary before any equipment could be purchased for tertiary and rural sites. This included processing documentation to receive a $50,000 matching grant from the WV Healthcare Authority. Continued reporting/documentation to the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation for their grant to fund a project coordinator and to provide support for project coordination, site travel, and education and awareness projects for all sites.

3. **Website Enhancement.** With the WV Perinatal Partnership taking a lead role; information related to the WV Perinatal Telehealth Network was posted on the Partnership’s website.

4. **All tertiary care centers (perinatologists) have received equipment** to provide consultation services. These sites include:
   - Cabell Huntington Hospital – Huntington, WV
   - CAMC – Women and Children’s Hospital, Charleston, WV
   - WVU Hospital-Ruby Memorial, Morgantown, WV

5. **Equipment specifications for the rural sites have been completed** and equipment was ordered. Delivery for these sites took place for spring/summer 2011. The WV Telehealth Alliance has provided opportunities for reduced or enhanced broadband capabilities for these rural sites thru a project with the FCC. There has been some delay in getting rural sites assessed for the delivery of these broadband services. Broadband will be rolled out to most sites during the spring, 2011.

6. **Education, Awareness and Development Meetings**

   A series of meetings and statewide planning workshops were held in an effort to educate and receive input about the project. These events included:
   - WV Perinatal Summit – November 11-12, 2010
   - WV Perinatal Telecommunications Advisory Board – September 22, 2010
     Billing and Reimbursement Issues
   - WV Perinatal Telecommunications Advisory Board –
- Education/Project Update - Web Series #1 - February 22, 2011 – Topic: Credentialing Issues
- WV Perinatal Telecommunications Advisory Board –
  - Education/Project Update - Web Series #2- March 22, 2011 - Topic: Credentialing Issues
- WV Perinatal Telecommunications Advisory Board –
  - Education/Project Update - Web Series #3- April 26, 2011 – Topic: Clinical Assessment

7. Equipment deployment

Equipment roll-out was completed during the summer of 2012 and site testing was conducted with the tertiary referral sites. Perinatal consultations began in 2012.

8. Currently the following types of consultations are occurring

- High-Risk Prenatal Consults
- Neonatal Consults
- Fetal or Pediatric Cardiology Consults
- Pediatric Neurology Consults

9. Usage

Currently usage of equipment for consultations is not as high as expected. Initially, all sites were provided with logbooks to keep track of usage. So far, four sites have conducted 32 consultations.