

TELEHEALTH IN THE NORTHEAST

FIELD REPORT: SAMPLE STAKEHOLDER CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS, & LESSONS LEARNED

NORTHEAST TELEHEALTH RESOURCE CENTER (GRANT GA5RH37459)

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QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT DANIELLE LOUDER, PROGRAM DIRECTOR (DLOUDER@MCD.ORG)

SCHOOL-BASED TELEPSYCH PROGRAM PIVOTS TO HOME-BASED COUNSELING UNDER COVID-19

The Northeast Telehealth Resource Center (NETRC) has worked with the team at Athol Hospital since the inception of their school-based telepsychiatry program, initially assisting them with development of a program Roadmap in 2015. Since that time, the Athol team has leveraged program successes and lessons learned to secure additional support and funding, and have expanded from one local school to four, including both high school and middle school aged students. The NETRC team continues to assist with program evaluation as the reach and scope have increased over time, most recently through a HRSA TBHNP grant.

This program relies on strong collaboration between Athol Hospital, a rural hospital in the North Quabbin Region of Massachusetts, the local school system, and a regional behavioral health provider, to ensure access to timely and effective behavioral health services for students within the school setting. (See February 24 article in the [Boston Globe](#)). When COVID-19 arrived in March, 2020 the team quickly pivoted to ensure continued access to services with students at home, and they haven't skipped a beat since, successfully transitioning every student (104 total) to home-based counseling within a matter of days. Across the country, a common challenge for delivering telehealth services to the home has been lack of adequate bandwidth and/or technology, particularly in rural areas like Athol, however the team was quickly able to assess student needs, provide necessary technology and/or counsel students via telephone as needed.

The Athol team recently shared their experience and outcomes with regional stakeholders during the NETRC/MATRC Virtual Telehealth Conference in June, 2020 (slide deck attached in EHB). See this great [video](#) highlighting the Athol program, and a recent mHealth Intelligence article: [COVID-19 Concerns Add Value to School-Based Telehealth Programs](#), in follow up to the NETRC/MATRC Virtual Conference Series.

A novel approach to counseling depressed, anxious teens: Video-chatting with therapists

A pioneering schools project connects stressed-out young people to therapists miles away via computers

By Kay Lazar Globe Staff, Updated February 24, 2020, 4:24 p.m.



Licensed mental health counselor Leslie Matilainen (seen on monitor) conducted a counseling session with 16-year-old Jerry at Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School. PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF/BOSTON GLOBE

"Now that we're at home, we've seen things that we've never seen before," Donovan said during a recent virtual session hosted by the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Centers.