

# 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)

### NETRC'S NEW E-LEARNING COURSE – TELEHEALTH BASICS FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

The shift from in-person to virtual care during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed inequities in vulnerable populations along the digital divide, including digital literacy. During this time, Community Health Workers (CHWs) have used innovative methods to help clients access health and social services through technology, with little prior formalized training to support this role. The Northeast Telehealth Resource Center (NETRC) team, in collaboration with regional stakeholders, including the [Care Transformation Collaborative of Rhode Island](#) (CTC-RI) and [Providence Community Health Centers](#) (PCHC), identified the need to develop novel training content. We recognize that CHWs, community health teams (CHTs), patient navigators, health coaches, peer counselors, and others serving in a similar role are uniquely positioned, given adequate training, to help address the digital divide.

Above: Still image of the *Telehealth Basics for Community Health Workers* online training course hosted on [www.TelehealthClassroom.org](http://www.TelehealthClassroom.org)

Development of “Telehealth Basics for Community Health Workers” began in January 2021 with a scan of existing training, resources, and literature that focused on the facilitation of technology use and telehealth with clients by CHWs. Quickly the NETRC team found that very few, if any, such resources were available. The NETRC team conducted interviews and focus groups with CHWs and CHTs to gain a better understanding of their role and their potential to facilitate technology and telehealth use with clients. These formative interviews led to the development of a survey that was distributed to CHWs across the country and aimed to refine the training needs that would be prioritized in the novel training course. Over 300 CHWs responded to the national survey and themes identified therein became the foundation for the course. NETRC staff took the lead in course design, scriptwriting, and development. “Telehealth Basics for Community Health Workers” was reviewed prior to publication by staff at NETRC, CTC-RI, and [Community Care Cooperative](#) (C3), a MassHealth Accountable Care Organization (ACO). Additionally, NETRC partnered with the [Community Health Worker Association of Rhode Island](#) and the [Rhode Island Certification Board](#) to provide Rhode Island CHW course reviewers with two credit hours toward recertification.

“Telehealth Basics for Community Health Workers” is the latest addition the NETRC’s open-access resource portal, [Telehealth Classroom](#). This self-paced training course is intended for community health workers and others who assist clients in the prevention, management, and self-management of chronic health conditions using technological tools and telehealth. It takes approximately 90 minutes to complete the course and complements CHW core competency training by providing individuals with added education, skill building, and access to resources.

**Topics in this course include:**

- What is Telehealth
- Telehealth Modalities
- How to Assess for Technology and Telehealth Readiness
- Community Health Worker Roles and Implications for Telehealth
- Community Health Worker Skills to Support Technology and Telehealth Use
- Supporting Technology and Telehealth Activities

The Northeast Telehealth Resource Center team will be pursuing opportunities to promote this open-access course throughout the region and beyond, including active discussions with the National Association of Community Health Workers and regional Community Health Worker Associations.

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