

TELEHEALTH IN THE NORTHEAST

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

NORTHEAST TELEHEALTH RESOURCE CENTER (GRANT GA5RH37459)

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HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS LEVERAGE TELEHEALTH FOR CONTINUED LEARNING DURING COVID-19



The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, 2020 and subsequent transition to distance learning for colleges and universities across the globe, left a majority of health professions programs scrambling for hands-on clinical training opportunities, which are typically provided each Spring/Summer.

The University of New England (UNE) in Maine, and Simmons University in Massachusetts, reached out to the Northeast Telehealth Resource Center (NETRC) to strategize around potential resources and approaches for ensuring their health professions students had access to hands-on training opportunities, with a focus on telehealth, given the need to follow social distancing during the height of the pandemic.

The NETRC team rapidly compiled content and curricula from existing NETRC resources, and worked with each of the universities to customize online Telehealth Implementation Toolkits, with resources specific to their respective health professions programs: [Physician Assistant](#) and [Social Work](#). Each toolkit included core concepts of telehealth (e.g. needs assessment, workflow analysis, billing/reimbursement, policies and procedures, team roles, technology, etc.), as well as key considerations under COVID-19. Each university launched their online training course in May, 2020 and included the self-paced Telehealth Implementation Toolkit, and live training via video. UNE also worked with a remote patient monitoring partner to incorporate hands-on practice of telemedicine, starting with mock patient visits, and moving to successful visits with high risk patients at home, under supervision of their clinical preceptors.

See the University of New England's story here:

[UNE Physician Assistant Students Continue Learning Through Telemedicine.](#)

The NETRC team also worked with Simmons' Center for Innovation in Behavioral Health Education and Research (CIBER) to provide a Virtual Telebehavioral Health 101 Training for more than 350 students and faculty in the Simmons School of Social Work in April, 2020.

"When we started PA school, I don't think any of us imagined trying to walk someone through an abdominal exam or giving information through a camera, but we are learning it is possible," student Jennifer Carraux said.

"I think it is very unique that we got to experience it instead of learning in a book," Carraux said.