

## **Abstract**

**Nature and Scope of Project:** There is a severe shortage of resources for mental health care in the United States, especially in rural areas. Primary care providers are often the first to encounter patients with mental health concerns. Research shows that primary care may not be equipped to manage all mental health issues. The purpose of this project was to obtain feedback from individuals through a survey in rural Northeast Minnesota regarding mental health telehealth and analyze multiple primary care mental health models to determine how to best incorporate this type of model into telehealth visits in rural Minnesota. The information collected from the survey and the research was presented to stakeholders.

**Synthesis and Analysis of Supporting Literature:** Several evidence-based primary care behavioral health models were analyzed in the literature review. Each of these models included evidence as to why this model was effective and how it could best be used in other health organizations. The goal of our research and project was to determine in what ways these models could be used in the rural northern Minnesota region and adjust them for potential telehealth use.

**Project Implementation:** A survey was distributed to community members who will be impacted by these potential care models. The goal of the survey was to get a better understanding of what the patients in this community are looking for in their telehealth care and how we, as healthcare professionals, can best serve them. Survey results and research recommendations were presented to stakeholders.

**Evaluation Criteria:** This project was evaluated based on the potential for future change of primary care in northeastern Minnesota. Although these care models will not be implemented by the current researchers, the information gathered and analyzed will allow for future researchers

to implement the findings into practice. The findings were presented to stakeholders at Wilderness Health.

**Outcomes:** 18 stakeholders provided feedback for implementation of care models into telehealth practice. The results of the survey revealed that 50% of respondents believed that a behavioral health care model could be implemented in a telehealth setting within 1-3 years. All the respondents believed a behavioral health care model would have a positive impact on the mental health of the individuals in rural Minnesota.

**Recommendations:** Based on the survey results from community members and feedback from stakeholders, there is increased interest in establishing a primary care behavioral health model for telehealth use in rural Minnesota. A behavioral health primary care model for telehealth has the potential for increased access to care, decrease in cost, and increased patient satisfaction.