

Health-e-Access: Using Technology To Care for Children

Case for Action:

- Impoverished inner city children are 3 to 5 times more likely than suburban counterparts to visit the ED and to be hospitalized with common conditions such as asthma, bronchiolitis, and gastroenteritis/dehydration
- Delayed treatment or inappropriate treatment have been identified as contributors to this increased rate of hospitalization, which in turn is closely linked to access to care
- Research has also shown that children in child care centers have higher rates of common childhood illnesses such as ear infections, colds and pink eye
- Parents and guardians who use child care centers report that 40% of work absences are due to child illness
- In a nationally-representative sample across the socioeconomic spectrum, over 50% of working women report they will need to miss work the next time a child is sick.

Description:

Health-e-Access is a creative solution that uses the latest information technology to assist working families to gain access to primary pediatric care for their children at convenient neighborhood locations, such as schools and day care centers. Parents can secure prompt medical attention without losing work time.

- High-quality videoconferencing, digital medical cameras, electronic stethoscope, and other diagnostic equipment
- Trained aides (telehealth assistants) enable videoconferencing and help with examination of children by sending high resolution digital images, lung sounds, and video clips to nurse practitioners and doctors.
- Generally, these “virtual house calls” are made by a clinician from the child’s own primary care practice. Nine community primary care practices currently participate, including the Pediatric Practice of the Golisano Children’s Hospital at Strong.
- Physicians make medical evaluations for a broad range of problems and discuss treatment options with caregivers and patients who may be miles away
- Based on success in school and child care sites, Health-e-Access has recently expanded to convenient

Partners:

23 Childcare and School sites in the Rochester area
9 Primary Care Pediatric and Family Medicine Practices
Department of Pediatrics
Rochester City School District
Wilson Commencement Park
Volunteers of America
Monroe Plan for Medical Care
Grace United Methodist Church

ABC Head Start
Aetna
Diocese of Rochester
Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield
Ibero-American Action League
Mary Cariola Children’s Center
MVP Health Care
Charles St. Settlement House

Outcomes:

- Since the program started in 2001, more than 7,000 visits have been completed (as of July 1, 2009)
- Absences due to illness have decreased dramatically (63% in inner city childcare)
- 94% of parents who use Health-e-Access report that it allowed them to stay at work
- 94% report that it helped to avoid an ED or office visit
- 85% of telemedicine visits are done by the child’s own primary care medical practice
- 22% fewer Emergency Department visits among children with Health-e-Access, compared with a matched control group
- Has received numerous awards

For more information:

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