Telehealth Grant for Bassett's School-Based Health Program

Bassett Healthcare Network has been awarded $297,419 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for up to four years to bring telehealth services to school-based health.

The grant-funded project will benefit students enrolled in 18 of Bassett’s school-based health centers in Delaware, Otsego and Chenango counties, which are federally-designated health professional shortage areas with significant unmet needs for high-quality, accessible comprehensive primary and preventive care.

Dr. Chris Kjolhede, co-director of the Bassett School-Based Health (SBH) Program, notes the need for comprehensive primary care includes a need for access to certain pediatric subspecialists not readily available in rural central New York.

"The geographic spread across the rural region Bassett serves makes it virtually impossible to effectively and efficiently meet specific health needs of the pediatric population," explains Kjolhede. "This grant will help us connect students, via remote access, to subspecialists in the areas of pediatric pulmonology and endocrinology at the University of Rochester Medical Center - Golisano Children's Hospital. We will also have access to a child and adolescent psychiatrist in the New York City area. Asthma, diabetes and behavioral health are all areas of growing need among our pediatric population, and we believe telehealth can play a critical role in addressing the need."

The project will also include diabetes care/education, obesity prevention programming/nutritional counseling, oral health care, behavioral health services, and asthma care and education.

"Thanks to the help and expertise of Jane Hamilton, program manager, in getting this grant, Leah Carpenter, DDS, who has embraced the SBH model of dental health care and treatment and Dr. Nina Schor, department of pediatrics, University of Rochester, for her support, and many other team members, telehealth technology will help with access issues for many students and their families," says Kjolhede.

Once remote access equipment is in place, it's expected that nearly 200 tele-psychiatry visits can be completed annually, as well as several hundred asthma self-management activities and at least 280 preventive and specialty oral telehealth visits. The telehealth dental visits will be provided by Leah Carpenter, DMD. Telehealth visits will be in addition to appointments that already occur in the school-based health centers.

From July 2015 through June 2016, with an enrollment of 7,762 students, SBH handled 33,522 visits; 32 percent were mental health visits and 59 percent were medical visits; the dental component continues to grow and provided 3,054 (9 percent) visits.