



Telehealth Task Force Report to the Governor to be released

The Illinois Lt. Governor's Telemedicine Taskforce Subcommittee, which includes Dr. Gurpreet Mander, Illinois Telehealth Network (ITN) Executive Director, completed summer meetings and will publish its recommendations for proposed telehealth changes to the Governor next month. The purpose of the Taskforce is to provide recommendations to Governor Rauner for the modernization of Illinois' telemedicine policies to improve quality and access to care, while reducing costs for healthcare delivery to Medicaid beneficiaries. Meeting resources and minutes may be found [here](#).



Innovation Spotlight: Saving Lives

LifeNet: Linking critical patients and EMS paramedics in the field to cardiologists and emergency rooms



A charter ITN member, the Prairie Heart Institute at HSHS St. John's Hospital has implemented a new LifeNet System that uses real-time telemedicine technology to save lives.

In the event of a heart attack and a 911 call to activate EMS, this technology allows for critical patient EKG data to be sent instantly from a paramedic to a hospital cardiologist's smartphone or other device. A technology that replaces a fax machine printout of an EKG, the LifeNet system reduces delays and expedites treatment decisions, and allows the hospital to be better prepared to take care of the exact heart issues patients are experiencing when patients arrive in the emergency room.

LifeNet helps reduce the treatment time from dialing 911 for first responders, to diagnosis and care when patients experience a dangerous form of heart attack known as STEMI (ST elevation myocardial infarction). By transmitting EKG information from the ambulance directly to the

"The LifeNet System allows paramedics in the field and emergency room physicians and Prairie cardiologists to focus on treatment decisions and patient care while the system works quietly and effortlessly in the background," said Dr. Greg Mishkel, interventional cardiologist and executive medical director of the Prairie Heart Institute. "From the onset of symptoms to treatment, time is the critical factor for improving survival and outcomes for these patients. Having this new system will continue to help us beat the guideline of treatment in 90 minutes or less, as recommended by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology."

The LifeNet System allows emergency responders to transmit a 12-lead electrocardiogram (EKG) and other emergency information from the ambulance directly to the emergency room at St. John's Hospital. This technology replaces the practice of faxing the EKG from the ambulance to the ER. This new

hospital cardiologist before the patient ever arrives, paramedics are able to receive feedback on emergency care and the hospital emergency room is able to prepare for the patient's arrival. Because STEMI poses a serious threat to the heart muscle, and the quicker patients receive treatment, the more likely they are to have a positive outcome, with reduced disability, reduced recovery time, and even saving lives.

telemedicine technology is faster, more actionable and efficient, in connecting to emergency rooms and also directly to cardiologist smart phones. This new service allows the teams in the emergency room and cardiac catheterization (cath) lab to prepare for the patient's arrival while the patient is being transported by ambulance so door-to-balloon time is reduced and heart muscle can be saved.

The video above is an interview with a patient, Terry Hart, who experienced a heart attack one day while trimming hedges. The interview plays the actual EMS call and tells the story of how a new innovation in Litchfield and Springfield and other ITN communities is being used to save lives and improve outcomes.

[Learn more about Prairie Heart Institute of Illinois](#)

ITN Member Awarded Two Federal Grants



\$300,000 in USDA funding to combat the

opioid crisis

Congratulations to network member **Jersey Community Hospital (JCH)** in Jerseyville for being successful in writing and submitting two federal grant applications to combat opioid abuse. The ITN Grants, Philanthropy and Sustainability Committee played a very small role in supporting Jersey Community Hospital in its application in monthly committee meetings with advice and support. The Committee helped JCH in drafting a federal grant management policy and procedure from an ITN template, and also provided a support letter from Dr. Mander, ITN's Executive Director, to support the application. The two Rural Development USDA grant projects were announced September 10 with investments to:

- Purchase and renovate a building that will be used to house a rural health clinic in the community of Roodhouse. Facility staff will provide treatment, counseling, education and outreach efforts to combat the opioid crisis. This project will benefit the area's 4,300 residents.
- Purchase and renovate a Jerseyville facility to serve as an Opioid Treatment Program Specialty Care and Administrative building to provide treatment, counseling, education and outreach to combat the opioid crisis.

The USDA press release can be found [here](#).

Governor Signs Telehealth Bill



A victory for rural health; increased access to behavioral health care in shortage areas

On August 22, Illinois **Governor Bruce Rauner** signed telehealth legislation, Senate Bill 3049, into law. It will go into effect on January 1, 2019. The measure requires Medicaid to provide reimbursements for behavioral health telehealth services. **Dr. Gurpreet Mander, ITN Executive Director, testified twice before legislative committees in support of the bill, and hosted ITN member hospital telemedicine demonstrations for legislators.** Prior to the passage of the legislation, Illinois laws and regulations limited telehealth use and reimbursement, especially for persons insured by Medicaid. The legislation will expand access to telehealth behavioral services for rural, underserved and disadvantaged patient populations throughout the state. "We are thrilled to see this measure signed into law by Gov. Rauner, as we know it will continue to expand the services we can provide through telehealth," said Dr. Mander. "Many thanks to **Sen. Andy Manar (48th Dist.)** and **Rep. Sue Scherer (96th Dist.)** for their partnership and work on this important bill." Many thanks, also, to Catie Sheehan's support from the HSHS Advocacy team. Complete text of Public Act 100-1019: [Senate Bill 3049](#)



Nominations Due Oct. 31 for Board Vacancies

Call for Nominations & Self-Nominations

Over the summer, several of our network members experienced senior leadership changes which opened three seats on the ITN Board of Directors. As demonstrated at the Annual Meeting, the network has had many successes advancing telehealth over the past year, and much of this success is due to engaged and committed board leadership.

All ITN members are invited to submit nominations or self-nominations for consideration for Board service using the nomination form. After submission, the current Board will review all submissions and appoint new members.

If your organization is interested in participating in a leadership position with the ITN, please complete the PDF

New ITN Member Pilot in Shelbyville: World-Renowned Diabetes Care via Telemedicine

Network member HSHS Medical Group launched a telemedicine pilot to offer world-class diabetes care at HSHS Good Shepherd Hospital in Shelbyville, Illinois. Using telemedicine to connect patients with providers, the Joslin Diabetes Center now serves patients in Shelbyville.

Patients are able to better manage their diabetes with the support of highly-specialized team of experts, including board-certified endocrinologists, nurse practitioners, certified diabetes educators and dietitians from the [Joslin Diabetes Center](#). Congratulations to HSHS Medical Group for their successful new pilot to increase patient access to quality specialized care in an underserved health professional shortage area.

nomination form using the link below.
Nominations are due **Wednesday, October 31**. The slate of candidates will be submitted to the ITN Board.

[Submit Nomination](#)



ITN at State Telehealth Forum with Lt. Governor

ITN leaders attended and presented on a panel at the statewide Telehealth Law Forum on September 20. The forum, hosted by the law firm of Drinker Biddle in Chicago, was available by videoconference and included about 80 attendees. Sponsored by Partnership for a Connected Illinois, the forum focused on new state legislation will affect telehealth Medicaid reimbursement on January 1, 2019, and proposed CMS Medicare telehealth reimbursement changes for the new year, and advocacy strategies to improve rural reimbursement for other health care services. Speakers included **Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti**, an Illinois Senator, state and federal regulators, and industry leaders in the areas of substance use disorder treatment, chronic care management and behavioral health. The forum examined current legal and regulatory environment, reimbursement trends and opportunities, telemedicine delivery and business models, and provided perspectives of health care providers, public and private payers. (Photo above: David Mortimer, ITN Sustainability and Grant Development Director, Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti, and Julie Edwards, ITN Network Director and forum panelist.)



Community Education

Live Teleneurology Demonstration & Stroke Education Seminar

This past September 13, **HSHS St. Francis Hospital** in Litchfield hosted an evening community education event that featured a live teleneurology (tele-stroke) demonstration. The event also included an overview of the Illinois Telehealth Network (ITN) and information about stroke treatment & prevention from HSHS Medical Group's vascular and interventional neurologists. A link on Facebook broadcasting the event live received more than 1,000 views. [Watch a videotape of the event on Facebook.](#)

The community event was designed to provide information and education to the public, and highlighted the hospital's critical role in launching and sponsoring the ITN. Community members also experienced a live demonstration of telemedicine technology currently in use for neurology-related services at the hospital. Dr. Naim Khoury and Dr. Jacob Kitchener, HSHS Medical Group's vascular and interventional neurologists. The speakers provided information and answered questions about stroke treatment and prevention. Blood pressure checks, gift bags and giveaways were a part of the community event.

HOST YOUR OWN EDUCATIONAL EVENT!

ITN Sustainability: Medicare Reimbursement

Proposed CMS 2019 Physician Fee Schedule: "Sea of Change"

The [Funding Year 2019 Proposed Rule](#) contains a new interpretation of CMS's statutory requirements for the reimbursement of remote communications technology. There are three categories of newly proposed codes:

- Brief communications technology-based services
- Remote evaluation of pre-recorded patient information
- Interprofessional internet consultation

The Proposed Rule includes special billing procedures have been formulated for FQHCs and RHCs. For more detailed information, see the Upper Midwest Telehealth Resource Center (UMTRC), an ITN Advisor, at: [CMS Proposed Fee Schedule](#). In addition, the Center for Connected Health Policy has a good [Proposed CY 2019 Physician Fee Schedule Fact Sheet](#) and [Infographic](#).

ITN Grant Development Update



Application submitted to secure telemedicine equipment

This past summer, a \$500,000 federal grant application was successfully submitted to the USDA Distance and Learning Telemedicine program

seeking equipment for 14 rural ITN sites. Many thanks to [Senator Durbin](#) and to [Senator Duckworth](#) for supporting our application with personalized letter. Funding announcements by the USDA area anticipated in November.

Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER 13, 2018 || The American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the Partnership for a Connected Illinois will hold it's annual Awards for Excellence in Telehealth Leadership luncheon in Chicago. Keynote speaker at noon will be Ann Mond Johnson, CEO of ATA. The event will be held at McDermott Will and Emery. Among the awards will be a recognition for Policy Changes to Advance Telehealth, presented to **Sen. Andy Manar** (D-48 Bunker Hill), **Sen. Julie Morrison** (D-29 Deerfield), **Sen. Dave Syverson** (R-35 Rockford), **Former Rep. Patricia Bellock** (R-47 Westmont), and **Rep. Ryan Spain** (R-73 Peoria). Congratulations to these elected representatives! Tickets are \$100. Contact ITN for registration information.

APRIL 14 - APRIL 16, 2019 || At ATA2019, healthcare professionals and leaders from an array of healthcare and technology sectors unite as one, cohesive community. Attendees learn, innovate, network, and return to their organizations with actionable insights, long-lasting connections, and an enhanced appreciation of telehealth—and how it transforms the way we deliver healthcare. [REGISTER NOW.](#)

Connected Care Public Comment

ITN is a member of the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition, which submitted a **FCC [Public Comment](#)** on 9/10/2018 on behalf of its [members](#). The

Comment advocated for improved rural broadband infrastructure to rural anchor institutions through the FCC's Connected Care program, in order to support rural telehealth and to help diminish the inequity of the "digital divide" and increase "digital opportunity."





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