



Access to high-speed internet is a social determinant of health, and in Washington, DC disparities in internet access and usage across neighborhoods significantly impact health outcomes.¹ Low levels of digital health literacy have also been found to be one of the most powerful predictors of poor health outcomes.²

GW HealthDesk seeks to address health equity issues in traditionally socio-economically disadvantaged areas of Washington DC by closing the digital divide among older adults and persons with chronic medical conditions. The program focuses on equipping medical professionals and patients with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively use technologies and telehealth services.

Phase 1 provided devices and introduced coaching to enable patients to use digital tools to manage their own health. Phase 2 aims to build upon these findings by enhancing both coaching content and the capacity for coaching among a broader group of clinical and non-clinical professionals. Phase 2 also explores the potential of augmented reality (AR) headsets in conducting remote, convenient and personalized, virtual training sessions.

Objective

GW HealthDesk aims to improve outcomes by providing patients with devices, connectivity, and teaching patients and providers to optimize their use of technology solutions. The approach demonstrates the benefits of emerging 5G data capabilities, speeds, latency, reliability and improved capacity in areas with poor connectivity.

¹ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpuhe.2023.02.001>.

² https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305784?url_ver=Z39.882003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Aacrossref.org&rft_

Beneficiaries

Phase 1 began by working with elderly, hypertensive patients living in multigenerational households. In Phase 2, the program worked with clinicians and clinical staff to understand their eHealth literacy needs and have expanded coaching to Medicaid enrollees, elderly and homebound patients.

Solution

In Phases 1 and 2, a 5G-enabled smartphone serves as a hotspot, enabling the connection of Bluetooth-enabled devices and facilitating secure telehealth interactions. Phase 2 leverages the Microsoft HoloLens2 AR headset, running on the Qualcomm Snapdragon® 850 compute platform, to improve the accessibility of personalized digital literacy training.

Strategic Stakeholders

We need to make the effort and the investments in improving digital literacy and technology accessibility so that we can find the right use cases for telehealth and other technology enabled care.

-Dr. Neal Sikka, MD; Professor; Chief, Section of Innovative Practice and Telehealth; The George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates
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