Using Telehealth to Serve Children in Early Intervention

JFK Partners and HCP Webinar
February 16, 2017

Overview

• Outcomes of Presentation
  – Understand the service delivery method of telehealth
  – Differentiate when telehealth may be an appropriate method for service delivery
  – Review research
• Colorado’s philosophy about telehealth
• Expectations for the coming year
What is Telehealth?

The application of evaluative, consultative, preventative, and therapeutic services delivered through telecommunication and information technologies” (AOTA, 2013, p. S85).

(Hu, n.d.)

Evidence Supporting Telehealth

- There are a number of studies that look at satisfaction with services both from a provider and a family standpoint.
- Two recent studies looked at comparing telehealth vs. in-person early intervention services (Blaiser, Behl, Callow-Heusser, & White, 2013; Behl, Blaiser, Dawson & Brooks, 2015).
- In both of these studies, services delivered via telehealth yielded outcomes as good (or better) than in-person visits:
  - Language measures
  - Cost effectiveness
  - Parent engagement
Next Steps for Research

• There needs to be more randomized/controlled studies that examine the effectiveness of the intervention
• Improvement on early intervention performance indicators

Telehealth and Early Intervention
**Telehealth in early intervention**

- Ability to provide services in *natural environment*
- Telehealth model utilizes *coaching* method of service delivery
- Using telehealth allows for *routines based intervention*

**Provider Benefits**

- Decreases travel constraints
- Reduces health-related cancellations
- Facilitates access to interpreters
- Increases use of family-centered coaching strategies
- Supports family involvement goals
- Provides access to qualified providers
- Provides opportunities to work as a team
Benefits for Families

• Increased child responsiveness to parent
• Increased skills of family members
• Improved child language development and listening skills
• Families have increased confidence in promoting child’s skills

Reasons Behind Implementation in Colorado

• Provider shortages
• Family schedules
• Weather
• Promotion of coaching
Pilot Project

- Pueblo county, Colorado
- Comprised of rural (plains), mountain and urban settings
- Relatively reliable broadband throughout county
- Staff who are very interested and excited about telehealth

Initial Training for Pilot Community

- In April 2015, 20 Colorado providers attended a two-day workshop provided by the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM)
  - Technology
  - Privacy and security considerations
  - Session logistics
  - Coaching
**Policy Changes**

- Very few actual policy changes required
- Needed to make telehealth an allowable method in Colorado’s State Plan
- Needed to put in the State Plan a requirement for providers to complete training prior to utilizing telehealth or obtain a waiver
- Forms needed to be created

**New Documentation**

- Consent Form
- Recording Disclosure Form
- Checklist for providers
- Brochure
Colorado’s Training

- Philosophy of training
- Online - free for providers
- Providers must take training before being able to bill for telehealth as a method

Roll-Out

- Guidance was provided to local programs
  - Prior to billing for telehealth, it must be added to the IFSP as a method, and the family must sign the consent form
  - Providers must take training (or request a waiver if they had been trained already) prior to billing for telehealth
Roll-Out Continued

- Policy allowing providers to bill for telehealth went into effect July 1, 2016
- A few providers have requested and obtained waivers, since they had already been trained
- At this point, few providers/families are utilizing telehealth
- We expect that as more providers are trained, the utilization of this method will increase

Data

- Once the Colorado-specific training is rolled out, we will begin to collect data
  - Number of providers who complete the training
  - Number of visits that are billed for telehealth
  - Provider, family, service coordinator and administration satisfaction surveys
  - Child outcomes
Questions?

Contact Information

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Thank you!