

# 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on **EHEALTH NETWORKING, APPLICATION AND SERVICES**

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## **Rural patient and provider perceptions of telehealth implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and future innovations**

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Understanding perceptions of telehealth implementation from patients and providers can improve the utility and sustainability of these programs, particularly in under-resourced rural settings. This presentation will review our study which evaluated both patient and provider perceptions of telehealth visits in a large rural healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic and discuss future innovations. Our study showed that over 73% of rural patients had favorable perceptions of telehealth visits, and satisfaction was generally higher among younger patients. Patients reported difficulty with scheduling follow-up appointments, lack of personal contact and technology challenges as common barriers. Over 80% of the 219 providers responding to the survey reported that telehealth added value to their practice, while 36.6% agreed that telehealth visits are more efficient than in-person visits.

Perception of telehealth value and efficiency did not differ by provider age ( $p=0.67$  and  $p=0.67$ , respectively) or time in practice ( $p=0.53$  and  $p=0.44$ , respectively). Technology challenges for the patient (91.3%) and provider (45.1%) were commonly reported. Telehealth perceptions were generally favorable among rural patients and providers, although satisfaction was lower among older patients and providers. Our findings suggest that telehealth approaches may add value and efficiency to rural clinical practice. Our presentation will discuss our future plans to improve Telehealth Access to this rural population. These innovations include the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence Software), rural kiosks to help address internet access issues, remote monitoring of blood pressures, blood sugars, and cardiac rhythms to provide state of the art care to remote areas..

### **Biography**

David Klee completed medical doctorate at the University of Minnesota and Family Medicine Residency at Mid-Michigan. He practiced in rural family medicine in Wisconsin for 10 years and has been the Associate Program Director for Munson Family Medicine Residency in Traverse City, Michigan for 14 years. He also serves as the Regional Dean for Michigan State University College of Human Medicine and directs their rural training track. He is a reviewer for several reputed journals and has presented nationally and internationally and recently published a telehealth paper in BMC Health Services Research.