

Samsung, Vitalchat and EQUUM Medical form telehealth partnership for rural hospitals

As the pandemic's toll worsens, new Access4Health program offers support for grants, technology and physician expertise to promote equal access to care resources.

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NEW YORK, March 1, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- The same forces that are plaguing urban hospitals today – severe staff shortages from workers contracting COVID, nurse and physician burnout from the pandemic, overflowing emergency beds and underused medical-surgical beds – are even more profound at rural hospitals. They were already underserved by physicians before COVID, and lack the resources to deploy costly staffing agencies.



Access4Health Initiative Collaboration to Increase Equitable Access to Care via Telehealth Equum Medical Samsung Vitalchat



National initiative delivers an affordable and tailored telehealth solution for small hospitals and their unique needs

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Telehealth is becoming a critical piece of the staffing solution across the nation, but rural hospitals struggle to pay for enterprise software designed primarily for large health systems, which have access to large information technology departments to implement them. Critical access and small community hospitals also lack staff with the expertise or time to take advantage of non-profit and state and federal grant funding for such initiatives.

To answer this challenge, two telehealth companies – Vitalchat and EQUUM Medical – and consumer electronics giant Samsung have joined forces on a project called Access4Health. Each represents a vital leg of the telehealth stool:

- **People:** Equum Medical delivers remote care from the right provider at the right time, from intensive care to specialists to expert nurses, using whatever technology the hospital staff has.
- **Technology:** Vitalchat delivers feature-rich telehealth securely through its lower-cost software, connecting caregivers, patients and families using existing workflows. The company has a number of affordable hardware options as well.
- **Funding:** Samsung has a wealth of specialized resources that can help organizations identify eligibility and apply for a wide range of government and non-profit funding programs that target rural health access and health equity.

"Telehealth is the great equalizer in medicine, and it is needed to bring life-saving medical interventions in cases where the local hospital lacks specialists, which we find almost everywhere," said Corey Scurlock, MD, MBA, CEO of Equum. "The problem has been that a solution that is affordable and tailored to a small hospital's unique needs has proved elusive. Until now."

Added Ghafran Abbas, Vitalchat's CEO/CTO: "We know that if telehealth is to meet the needs of rural America, it needs be effortless for staff to use at a price that is actually affordable. We built a new software platform that can quickly and easily integrate into existing workflows, requires zero management from staff and gives physicians the freedom to virtually round on patients at will."

In the design process of this collaboration, executives of Equum Medical and VitalChat turned to Samsung because of its experience in linking innovation to funding in telehealth. "There is a wealth of funding programs available for rural health, but often it goes unused because it takes specialized grant writing skills to convey the importance of a project to the grantors. We at Samsung, in partnership with the Grants Office are proud to be a part of this effort to connect rural providers with the kinds of medical expertise previously only found in large, urban academic medical centers." Says Ken Honeycutt, Director of Healthcare, Samsung Electronics.

While a national initiative, this collaboration will target states with evidenced shortages in beds and staff as tracked by Health and Human Services (HHS) databases. Commercial teams are preparing to present additional information and book executive briefings for early adopters on

this initiative at the upcoming VIVE Conference March 6-9 in Miami, FL and HIMSS Conference March 14-18 in Orlando, FL.

About

EQUUM Medical

For over 10 years, EQUUM Medical has provided board-certified critical care physicians delivering acute care telehealth to address the challenges hospitals and health systems face when trying to fill gaps in coverage. For more information, visit <https://equummedical.com/>

Samsung

Samsung inspires the world and shapes the future with transformative ideas and technologies. The company is redefining the worlds of TVs, smartphones, wearable devices, tablets, digital appliances, network systems, and memory, system LSI and LED solutions. For the latest news, please visit the Samsung Newsroom at <http://news.samsung.com>

Vitalchat

Vitalchat is a transformational telehealth software that effortlessly connects caregivers, patients and families using existing workflows on any commodity device...at a fraction of the cost of other solutions. For more information, visit <https://vitalchat.com/>

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