



Rural Citizens Access to Telehealth (RCAT)

Telemedicine is a crucial tool in expanding healthcare access to rural communities, offering benefits like remote care, cost reduction, fewer ER visits, and less travel. In areas with healthcare shortages, it provides essential medical services, helping reduce wait times.

Despite its advantages, there are challenges to implementing telehealth services such as high upfront costs for equipment and software, and a lack of formal trainings. Many staff also lack the time or expertise to integrate telehealth effectively. To address these issues, the Missouri Telehealth Network (MTN) and the Missouri Department of Social Services, MO HealthNet Division are working together to support healthcare organizations across Missouri.

The Rural Citizens Access to Telehealth (RCAT) program helps overcome barriers by offering funding and technical support to expand telehealth services in rural areas. The program focuses on healthcare organizations that serve rural populations, participate in MO HealthNet, and aim to improve patient access and care.

With \$15 million in ARPA funds allocated over four years, 38 projects are underway, providing primary care, chronic care, hospital-based care, dental care, and mental health care. Although many projects are in early stages, initial results show improvements in patient care and access. Through continued collaboration, the RCAT program is helping bridge the healthcare gap in rural Missouri, ensuring timely, high-quality care for residents.