

TELEHEALTH IN MISSOURI



Telehealth services in Missouri have reached a pivotal moment. With the establishment of comprehensive telehealth laws in 2016 and 2018 that allow any licensed or registered professional to provide telehealth services, it is easy to see how quickly telehealth services will expand beyond their current growth. Combined with technology improvements in cell phones, video connection software, broadband connectivity and the rapid social acceptance and use of advanced communication technology, telehealth has become an expectation of both patients and providers.

This report serves as a baseline from which to judge the future expansion of telehealth. It combines and builds upon multiple sources, including Medicaid claims data,

Medicare claims analysis by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), previous reports by MTN and the Missouri Hospital Association's 2017 Status of Telemedicine in Missouri.

Data in this report include claims data from MO HealthNet from 2010-2017, accessed through the University of Missouri HealthNet Data Project, a collaboration of MO HealthNet, the Center for Health Policy, and the Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis at the University of Missouri. Additional data comes from a 2018 analysis of all Medicare Part B Fee-for-Service Medicare claims from 2013-2016 by CMS, and from the MHA's 2017 Status of Telemedicine in Missouri report, are referenced.

COMBINED TOTAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES

In 2017, 15,911 MO HealthNet beneficiaries had 49,557 telehealth visits. This is a tenfold increase in telehealth services provided to MO HealthNet beneficiaries since 2010 (Figure 1), and a nearly fourfold increase in beneficiaries that received telehealth services (Figure 2). In addition, according to data from CMS, in 2016, 4,107 Medicare beneficiaries received 13,443 telehealth services in Missouri, which is the fourth highest total of any state.

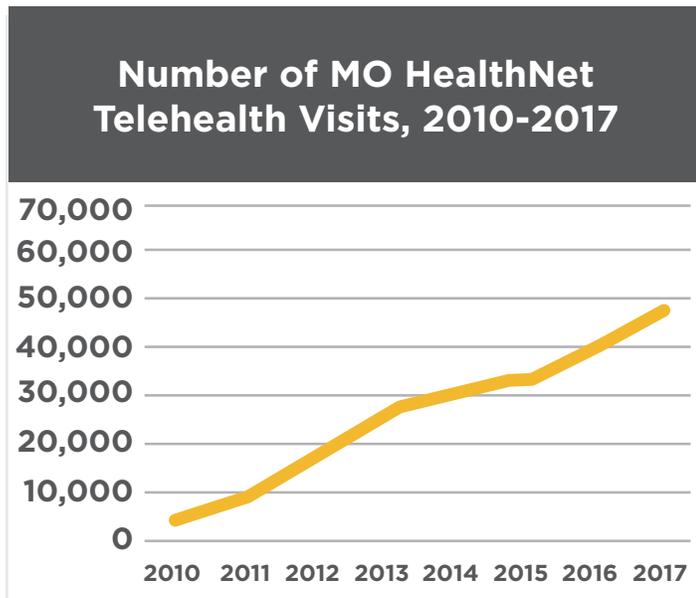


Figure 1

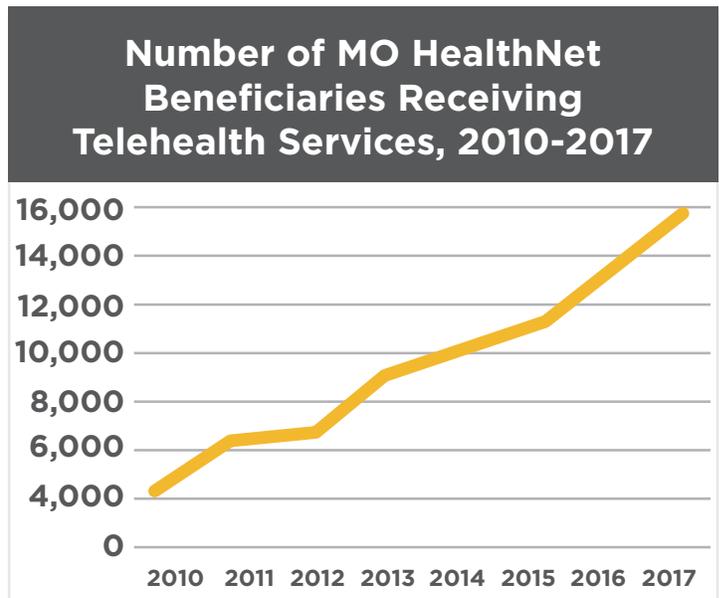


Figure 2

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF TELEHEALTH SERVICES

In 2017, only one county, Scotland, had no telehealth services delivered to MO HealthNet beneficiaries. This is in contrast to 17 counties with no telehealth services delivered to MO HealthNet beneficiaries in 2010. The county with the greatest number of MO HealthNet beneficiaries receiving telehealth services in 2017 was Pettis (661). This represents 6.9 percent of the total number of MO HealthNet beneficiaries (9,528) in Pettis County in State Fiscal Year 18. <https://dss.mo.gov/mis/cqfacts/2018-missouri-counties-quick-facts.pdf>

Most telehealth services (77.7 percent) are provided to MO HealthNet beneficiaries from rural areas of Missouri, as defined by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, though urban areas represent an increasing percentage of location for overall services delivered (Figure 3).

The fact that most telehealth services are delivered in rural areas of Missouri is not surprising given the public policy and financial support for telehealth services to be delivered in rural areas. This is currently best expressed by the laws and regulations governing telehealth services provided to Medicare beneficiaries (Medicare beneficiaries must, in nearly all circumstances, be in a rural area to receive telehealth services). A survey of rural hospitals performed in 2017 by MHA confirms the

widespread use and acceptance of telehealth by rural patients and providers. The survey found that more than half of rural hospitals in Missouri use telehealth, and that more than 80 percent indicate telehealth helps them retain patients.

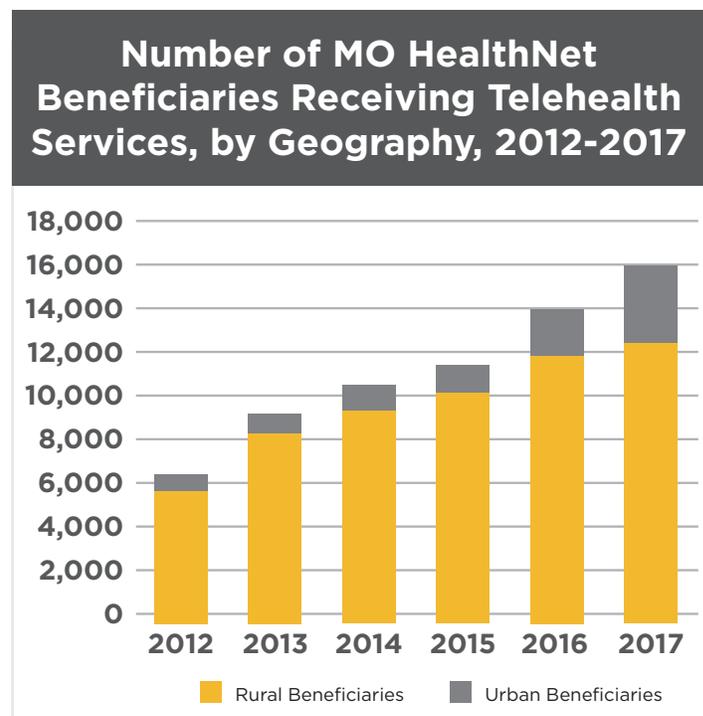


Figure 3