

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Sanford Research USD

Project Title: Broadband Access to Improve Health Status

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

A. PROBLEM/NEED “Rural populations tend to be older than urban populations and to experience higher rates of limitations in daily activities as a result of chronic conditions. Rural populations exhibit poorer health behaviors (i.e. higher rates of smoking and obesity and lower rates of exercise) relative to most urban populations, although there is variability in health behaviors among rural communities. Unless action is taken now, the future burden of chronic disease in many rural communities will be enormous” (Institute of Medicine, Quality Through Collaboration: The Future of Rural Health Care, 2005, p.3).

Effective use of broadband technology as an intervention to improve health behaviors requires careful planning to assure that the services provided are based on best practice and delivered to all who can benefit. Interviews and anecdotal information from rural healthcare providers and community members living in the rural areas served by this project confirm, as identified in Rural Healthy People 2010, that access to quality health services is the top ranking rural health priority. Lack of broadband availability for patients and guests at rural hospitals limits the number of cost effective and innovative services and educational programs the hospitals can provide to patients, families and rural healthcare providers.

B. OVERALL APPROACH This project is an extension of a successful project at Sanford University of South Dakota (USD) Medical Center, a 450+ bed tertiary hospital located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. As a regional medical center with nearly half of its patients coming from outside the immediate Sioux Falls community, Sanford Health leaders wanted to offer free public computer access services so that patients’ families have the much-needed connectivity without having to leave the hospital. The solution included guest wireless connectivity and public computer kiosks/workstations in the hospital lobby. Today, patients and families stay connected to life outside the hospital, research medical conditions and stay in touch with family members during their stay at Sanford USD Medical Center. Since this service began three years ago, additional public computer kiosks/workstations have been installed in various waiting rooms, providing patients and families with unlimited broadband access.

This proposed project, Broadband Access to Improve Health Status, takes this service one step further. Patients, families, and community members in a three-state area (South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa) will have guest wireless access and public computers available in their community hospitals; and each computer will be linked to Sanford Health's video and education library for current medical information about diseases, treatments and health promotion activities. Information will be posted at each public computer kiosk/workstation with links to health information based upon specific community health needs as identified by US Department of Health and Human Services' Community Health Status Indicators (communityhealth.hhs.gov). Each of the 12 Sanford Health Network rural hospitals in this project will collaborate with Sanford Health to identify and focus upon key health status indicators and, through outreach, encourage actions tailored to each community for improved health behaviors. For example, patients and their families will be able to:

- *Access accurate information about risk factors for premature death.
- *Gain information about the value of preventive screenings.
- *Learn about nutrition needs for diabetics, heart disease, or other chronic diseases.
- *Take a video tour of hospitals.
- *View an educational video presented by a Sanford physician about a procedure or health topic.

C. AREAS SERVED Target population for this project totals over 191,000 residents in rural counties served by the 12 Sanford Network Hospitals identified for this project. Hospital and community selection is based upon the implementation timeline for electronic information systems which include medical records, patient scheduling, registration, billing and personal health records. At the conclusion of this project, all hospital guests will have access to wireless connectivity and public computer kiosks/workstations at no cost to the user.

D. QUALIFICATIONS OF APPLICANT Sanford Health is a fully integrated health system comprised of two divisions: Health Services and Research and Development. The system includes over 320 physicians, 128 funded research faculty/staff and over 10,000 employees in five states (South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and Oklahoma). Sanford Health's vision, "To significantly improve the human condition through patient care, education and research" clearly defines its commitment to improving population health. As an integrated healthcare system, Sanford Health is able to offer outreach services and grants management in addition to information technology for this proposal. Additionally, a comprehensive educational and video library with current, relevant information housed on the Sanford Health website will be used as the core educational service for this project.

E. JOBS TO BE CREATED/SAVED The forecast of jobs to be created/saved is 12.

F. OVERALL COST \$1,725,351.