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Contact: Elise Nelson, 608-266-9600

Elise.Nelson@wisconsin.gov

Telemedicine Grants Benefit Rural and Underserved Regions

(MADISON) - The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin has approved grants for 21 applicants as part of the agency's Medical Telecommunications Equipment Program. The grants approved today are paid for through the state's Universal Service Fund.

“Technology and telemedicine equipment will increase access to care and improve health outcomes in Wisconsin in a cost-effective manner,” said Governor Walker. “These grants will help put patients firmly in the focal point of care while improving efficiency of delivery and reducing costs.”

The purpose of this grant program is to enhance access to medical care in rural or underserved areas of the state and increase access to care through technologically advanced medical services. The grants target projects that demonstrate the use of advanced telecommunications services to extend the availability of medical care in rural areas and among underserved populations.

The 21 grants approved today together total \$999,099 and include:

Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center: \$15,435.86 to purchase eight tablet computers, and a language interpretation application for each computer. The computers will be located in Scenic Bluffs clinics in Viroqua, Sparta, Norwalk and Cashton.

HealthNet of Rock County, Inc.: \$8,140.40 for equipment to facilitate patient consultation by teleconference between patients located in Janesville and a psychiatrist located in Madison.

Kenosha Community Health Center, Inc.: \$23,110.47 for the purchase of a mobile wireless telephone service, mobile and desk telephones, computers and connecting equipment and software for installation on a vehicle, the Mobile Medical Clinic.

HSHS St Clare Memorial Hospital: \$58,499 to purchase one telemedicine cart with a specialized application for treating stroke patients. The cart would be located at the St Clare Hospital Emergency Department in Oconto Falls.

The Lakes Community Health Center: \$63,716.01 for the purchase of three wall-mounted teleconference units, two telemedicine carts and 15 Mitel desktop telephones for clinics in Ashland, Iron River, and Minong.

Memorial Medical Center Foundation: \$78,717.99 for the purchase of three telemedicine units and associated equipment to facilitate consultations with specialists in other cities.

Trempealeau County Health Care Center: \$70,320 for the purchase of tablet computers to be used by patients to communicate with staff, and record information pertinent to a patient's specific treatment plan.

Ministry Door County Medical Center (MDMC): \$58,499 for the purchase of a telemedicine cart for MDMC Emergency Department to treat stroke patients which will be located at the Door County Medical Center in Sturgeon Bay.

Mile Bluff Medical Center: \$50,622.57 for the purchase of five telemedicine carts and associated equipment for clinics in Mauston, Elroy, Delton, Necedah, and New Lisbon. Mile Bluff proposes to use these carts for the treatment of stroke patients. The clinics could consult with neurologists at Gundersen in La Crosse and UW Health in Madison.

Mercy Health Foundation (Thorp project): \$38,901.01 for the purchase of a telemedicine cart for Ministry Health Care's clinic in Thorp, WI to provide patient consultation with specialists in other cities.

St. Elizabeth Hospital Foundation (Chilton project): \$38,901.01 for the purchase of a telemedicine cart for Ministry Health Care's Calumet Medical Center in Chilton, WI to provide patient consultation with specialists in other cities.

UnityPoint Health - Meritor Foundation: \$47,194 for the purchase of 30 home health monitoring units for use by patients residing outside of Dane County in order to measure patient-specific vital signs. A nurse care coordinator will monitor the data and communicate with the patients as needed.

Richland Hospital, Inc.: \$126,563 for the purchase of three sets of video conference equipment to be installed in three patient rooms in the intensive care section of Richland Hospital. Richland Hospital would use this equipment to communicate with UW Health intensivists in Madison regarding patient care.

St Elizabeth Hospital Foundation (Rhineland project): \$38,901 for the purchase of a telemedicine cart for Ministry Health Care's Ministry Medical Group, Rhineland in Rhineland, WI to provide patient consultation with specialists in other cities.

Medical College of Wisconsin Psychiatry Dept.: \$37,837.80 for the purchase of two telemedicine carts for faculty offices at the Medical College campus in Milwaukee.

Hudson Hospital Foundation: \$88,500 for the purchase of three digital pathology devices. The equipment would create digital images of tissue samples, permitting transmission of images to consulting pathologists at Regions Hospital in St Paul.

St Elizabeth Hospital Foundation (Stevens Point project): \$38,901 for the purchase of a telemedicine cart for Ministry Health Care's Ministry St Michael's Hospital in Stevens Point, WI to provide patient consultation with specialists in other cities.

UW Health: \$46,176.64 for the purchase of two telemedicine carts to facilitate consultation with UW Health neurologist regarding the treatment of stroke patients. The carts will be located at partner facilities in Platteville and Lancaster.

Home Health United: \$38,901 for the purchase of twenty-three home health monitoring units. The units would be used in conjunction with HHU's visiting nurse service to check in with patients, and measure patient specific vital sign parameters decided by the patient's physician.

Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation, Inc.: \$20,863 to replace outdated telemedicine equipment with two new telemedicine carts at Tomah Memorial Hospital and Richland Medical Center in Richland Center.

Aspirus, Inc.: \$10,399 for the purchase of a telemedicine cart for the Aspirus clinic in Rome. The cart would permit patients and staff in Rome to consult with specialists in Wausau and other locations regarding general medical issues including treatment of diabetes.

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