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THE CHILD READY VIRTUAL PEDIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (CRVPEDED): UTILIZING TELEHEALTH FOR THE EDUCATION AND SUPPORT OF RURAL EMERGENCY PROVIDERS

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Background: New Mexico is a rural state and access to pediatric specific care can require travel over long distances. The providers in rural areas do not utilize their pediatric skills and knowledge often and can lack confidence in the decisions needed to provide care.

Method: The CRVPedED Telehealth Network was developed to provide clinical support and education to rural emergency providers in the care of the acutely ill or injured pediatric patient. The network is utilized to increase knowledge and confidence in pediatric specific care. Education is offered via the telehealth network with structured, scheduled presentations and by attending originating site staff meetings virtually. Pre and post tests and confidence surveys are administered to evaluate knowledge acquisition and change in provider confidence level in caring for pediatric patients. Additionally, via the telehealth network, synchronous clinical support is offered on a case-by-case basis with peer discussion and patient examination, and family interaction ongoing co-management of patients is also offered.

Results: Thus far, we have conducted greater than 60 education interactions over the network. The improvement in confidence of healthcare providers is demonstrated by the comparison of pre and post survey following education opportunity. With increased confidence and support 33 clinical consults have been completed avoiding 27 patient transfers. This resulted in 9000 patient miles and \$1.1 M health care dollars saved.

Conclusion: The CRVPedED Telehealth Network has demonstrated health care cost savings and increased confidence of providers' knowledge and skills.

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