



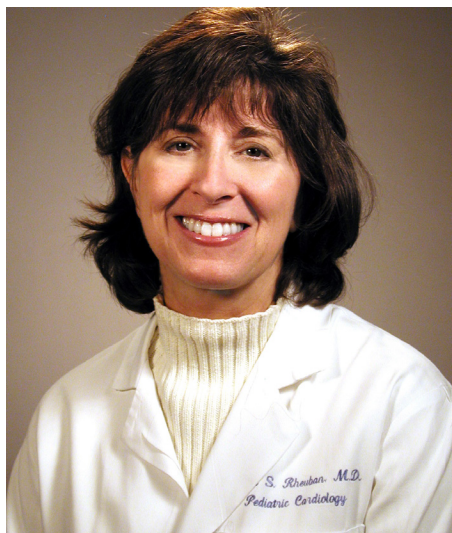
# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

*Virginia Telehealth Network*

The Virginia Telehealth Network (VTN) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting telehealth efforts in the Commonwealth. Started in 2006 by a group of health providers with an interest in promoting telehealth, VTN seeks to provide education, resources, and best practices to users of telehealth while advocating for safe and effective delivery of telehealth services. In addition, VTN develops and maintains strong partnerships that allow for the exploration and promotion of innovative programs that promote access to high-quality health care via telehealth.

<https://www.ehealthvirginia.org/>

# A letter from the VTN BOARD CHAIR



**Karen S. Rheuban, M.D.**  
Chair, Virginia Telehealth Network

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to share with you the highlights of what has been an extraordinary – and busy – year at the Virginia Telehealth Network. It truly has been a year marked by achievement, progress, and growth.

On the VTN advocacy front, the past year saw some important legislative activity, including some promising measures that signal a growing appreciation for the efficiencies and flexibility inherent in telemedicine. As we move forward, we'll be looking for ways to continue our advocacy, particularly as we seek funding support for various programs, including the Virginia Telemental Health Initiative, a pioneering partnership with free and charitable clinics that has seen tremendous success in the early going.

In 2023, we were pleased to continue our education efforts – especially with respect to telehealth best practices – as well as to work side by side with state policymakers as the facilitator for Virginia's State Telehealth Plan. The year also saw the second annual benchmarking survey designed to provide telling insights into Virginia's needs in the arena of virtual care.

You will read about all of the above and more in the pages to follow. And as you do, please remember that our work is made possible through the hard work and dedication of our partners and staff and by virtue of the support we receive from so many, including our friends in the General Assembly. We continue to be heartened by the trajectory of telemedicine, an arc of implementation driven by both patients and providers.

Sincerely,

Karen S. Rheuban, M.D.  
Chair, Virginia Telehealth Network



## Advocacy Efforts

During the 2023 short session, there were numerous bills introduced relating to telehealth, including:

- Health insurance coverage for audio-only telehealth services, which was tabled in committee and sent to the Health Insurance Reform Commission for a two-year bill review process before it can return to the General Assembly.
- The prevention of pharmacists rejecting prescriptions solely because a prescriber utilizes a telemedicine platform and prohibits them from favoring prescriptions from prescribers who do not use telemedicine over those who do.
- Health care providers and telemedicine service provider groups, with licensed health care providers in the Commonwealth, are not obligated to have a physical presence in the state to remain eligible for enrollment as Medicaid providers or vendors.

Specifically in the budget, the items of interest for VTN included the State Telehealth Plan and the Virginia Telemental Health Initiative.

## A Statement from Senator Mark Warner



“I was proud to expand telehealth in Medicaid as Governor back in 2003 – 20 years ago. Since then, I’ve pushed to expand telehealth nationwide, including through the CONNECT for Health Act, legislation I co-authored and have been proud to champion for years. The truth is, the pandemic was a real turning point for telehealth, demonstrating how effective it can be at bringing care to those who weren’t getting it before. That’s why I’m leading the charge to make these flexibilities permanent when they expire at the end of 2024.

We also learned how useful telehealth can be for patients with opioid addiction, which is why I was proud to introduce the TREATS Act – legislation to permanently adopt safe and commonsense telehealth practices that will expand care options for those battling substance use disorder.

***I’m grateful for the partnership with the Virginia Telehealth Network and the good work it’s doing to coordinate the implementation of telehealth across the Commonwealth.”***

# Advancement of the *State Telehealth Plan*

The General Assembly appointed VTN as a direct consultant to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to inform enhancement and track implementation of Virginia's State Telehealth Plan (STHP). This work includes ongoing listening sessions and other opportunities for community input to facilitate changes to the Plan as accepted medical practices and technologies evolve.

## Discussions at the *2023 VTN Summit*

On March 15, VTN hosted a significant pre-session of the 2023 Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center Summit dedicated to the STHP. The session encompassed high-level policy discussions addressing necessary changes at federal, state, and local levels, showcasing local telehealth innovations as potential models for replication across the Commonwealth, and fostering a multi-sector dialogue envisioning the trajectory of telehealth in Virginia over the next five years. This pivotal conversation played a key role in informing enhancements to the Plan, with attendees actively contributing their insights during the working session. This collaborative effort aims to incorporate the latest research on telehealth implementation, best practices, and innovative models into the strategic plan.

### ► Highlights of the Summit

**95**

Registered attendees

### **National speakers**

Remarks from national and statewide representatives including:

- Colleen Nguyen, Senior Health Policy Advisor, Office of Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA)
- Peter Fournier, Director, Product Management, National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)

## Key Stakeholder *State Telehealth Plan*

On November 15, VTN staff collaborated with the Virginia Rural Health Association in a listening session hosted by VDH specific to the needs of telehealth providers and patients in rural areas. Approximately 15 individuals representing hospital administration, academia, and direct care providers participated.

## Complementary *Collaborations*

To track telehealth utilization in the state and ensure collaboration across various efforts to advance telehealth, VTN participated in the development of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities' Assessment of Telehealth and Disabilities in Virginia report. VTN also provided guidance on a survey prepared by Birth in Color on telehealth usage in maternal health in the Commonwealth.



*VTN summit attendee asks question during listening session.*

# Second Annual *Benchmarking Telehealth Usage in Virginia Survey*

As part of ongoing efforts to monitor the impact of telehealth on Virginia’s patients and providers, VTN conducts an annual “Benchmarking Telehealth Usage in Virginia” survey of actively practicing licensed providers across the Commonwealth. This research effort is designed to help us better understand Virginia’s current and future needs with virtual care.

The second annual survey took place from January – March 2023 and was part of a VTN-led effort to inform enhancement of the State Telehealth Plan to reflect the current and future opportunities in telehealth implementation. The annual survey is supported by the Virginia Department of Health Professions and the Virginia Department of Health.

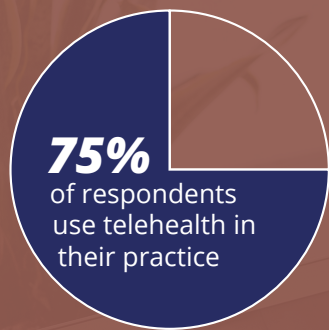
In addition to the annual survey, ongoing benchmarking data collection will include:

- Collaborating with MATRC and Ignis Health to create a Telehealth Performance and Quality Improvement Toolkit and Dashboard to assist provider practices and hospitals/health systems.
- Continuation of the telehealth locator mapping project for facility and independent telehealth providers.

For more information, [view the 2023 results.](#)



The 2023 survey garnered **over 10.5K** responses!



**23**  
National and local media mentions of survey findings

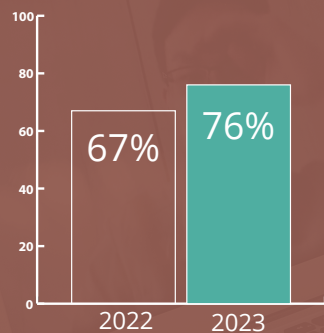
**1.8M**  
Impressions

mHEALTH INTELLIGENCE

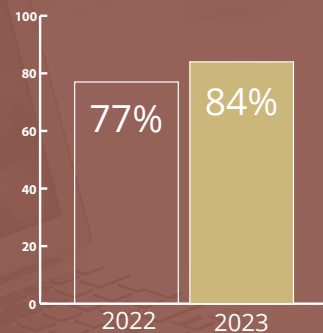
**12**  
On Your Side

VIRGINIA MERCURY

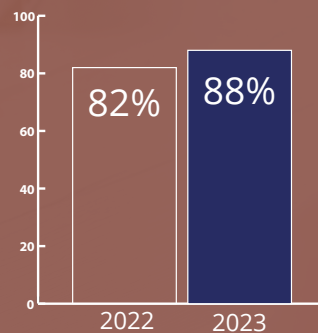
Healthcare IT News



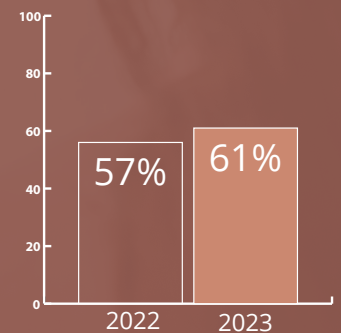
**“Telehealth has allowed me to see more patients.”**



**“Telehealth allows me to have more flexibility.”**



**“I feel confident in the quality of care I offer patients via telehealth.”**



**“I plan to increase telehealth use in the future.”**



## Enhanced *Education*

Telehealth has firmly established itself as an integral and expanding component of Virginia's health care system. VTN's efforts persist in educating and disseminating best practices among providers statewide. A comprehensive coverage of topics includes legislative changes related to the Public Health Emergency, addressing barriers to virtual care, and enhancing health equity via telehealth through written blog content, a monthly newsletter, and webinar events. Many blogs featured success stories and case-based learnings from free clinics, health care systems, and individual providers. They also included voices from leaders such as Virginia State Senator Barbara Favola and United States Senator Mark Warner.

### ► Results

**22**

Blogs

**3.7K+**

New email subscribers

**49%**

Email newsletter open rate

*(average open rate across all industries is 36%)*

**240**

Webinar registrants across two virtual events

## VTN *Membership*

At the beginning of 2023, VTN conducted a satisfaction survey of its past and current members. Insight collected was used to revamp VTN's membership offerings, providing added benefits identified as having the most value to participants. Enhancements implemented include launching a quarterly members-only newsletter with educational content and legislative updates and providing free access to VTN webinar events (non-members can register to attend for a fee). In 2024, VTN will continue to focus on engaging and retaining members.

### ► Results

**100%**

Member participation in the survey

**75%**

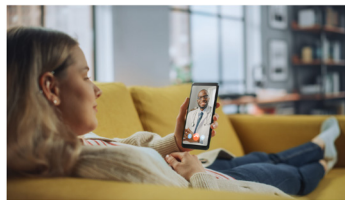
Increase in membership from 2022

**60%**

Of participants indicate they are satisfied with VTN membership

How the End of Emergency Provisions will Impact Telehealth

Posted on April 11, 2023



During the height of the pandemic, telehealth quickly became the vehicle of choice for the medical community, and the declaration of a national health emergency gave federal agencies, including Medicare, Medicaid, and private health insurance, increased flexibility in addressing

*Top-Read Blog:*  
**845 views**

# VTMHI Champions Mental Health Access, Fuels Workforce Development



In collaboration with the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services,

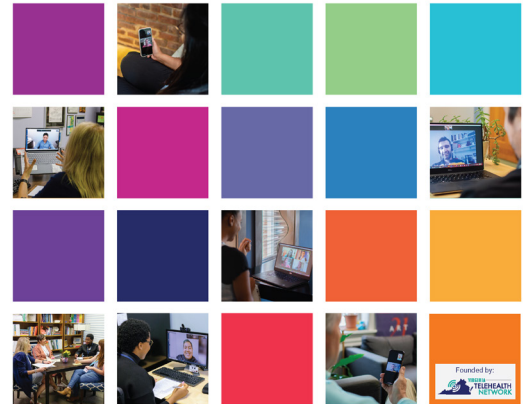
VTN leads efforts for the Virginia Telemental Health Initiative (VTMHI), a first-of-its-kind program that expands access to timely and appropriate telemental health services by collaborating with Virginia's free and charitable clinics and mental health providers who are in the process of meeting their licensure requirements.

For more information, view the [2023 VTMHI Impact Report](#).



## VTMHI Champions Mental Health Access, Fuels Workforce Development

2023 IMPACT REPORT



## First-Year Results

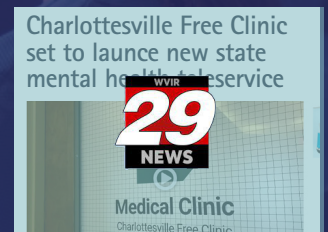
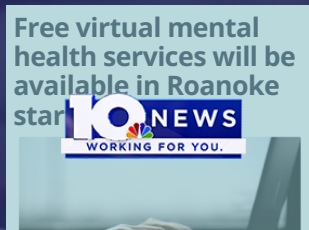
**Nearly 1,000**  
patient visits

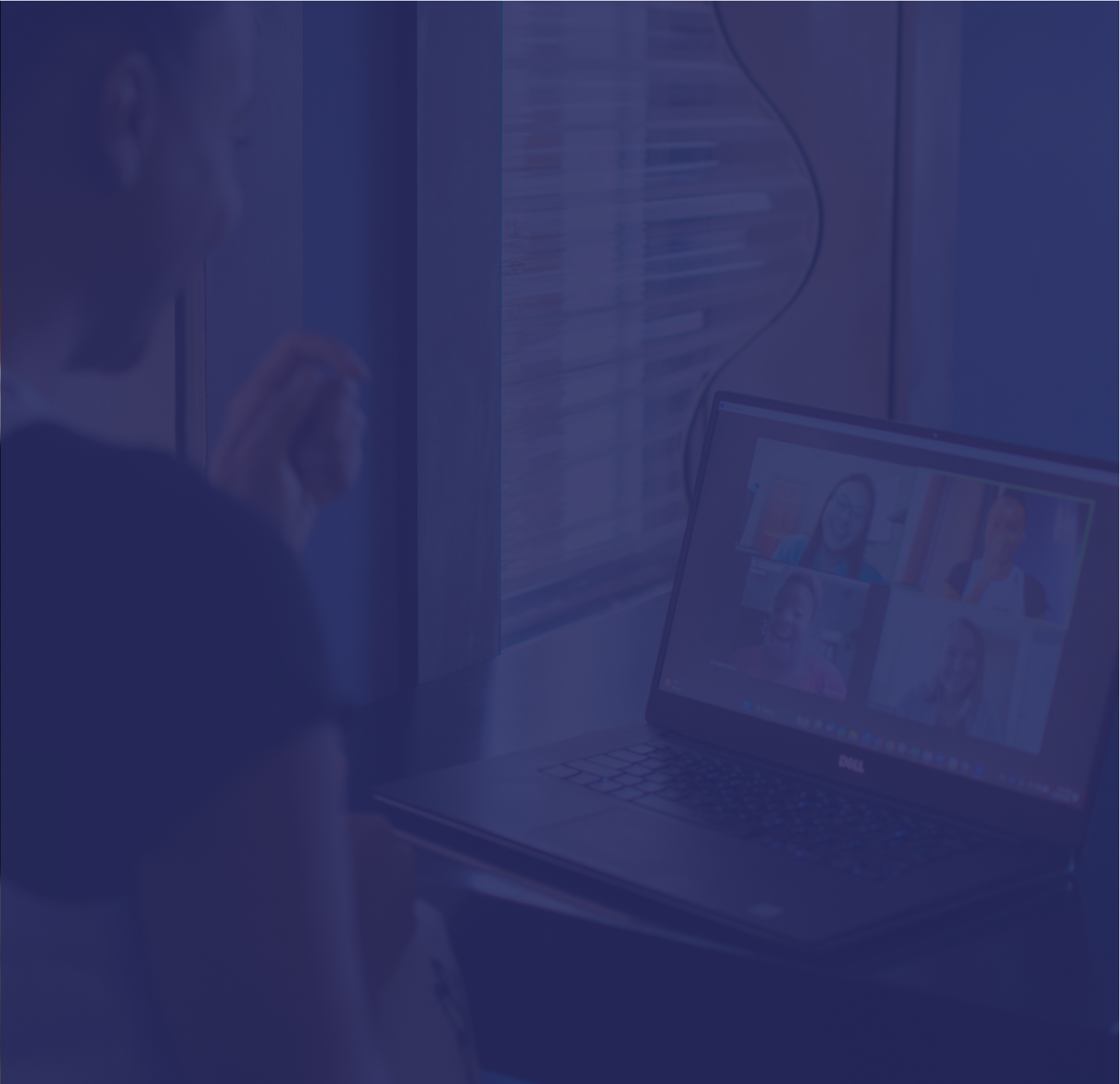
**100%**  
of patients completed mental health screening assessments

**11 Days**  
the average time between a patient's initial referral and first appointment

**43**  
pre-licensed mental health provider volunteers supported by six clinical supervisors

**2.6 Million**  
Media impressions from 21 mentions





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