

UMMC Earns National Telehealth Center of Excellence Designation

The federal Health Resources and Services Administration has designated the [Center for Telehealth](#) at the University of Mississippi Medical Center as one of two Telehealth Centers of Excellence, the agency's top award given only to programs at public academic medical centers.

"The University of Mississippi Medical Center's successful program is already a model for national telehealth expansion," said U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss. "As a Center of Excellence, UMMC will be able to demonstrate to a broader audience how to use telehealth to increase patient access to care and decrease costs. "Mississippians can be proud that our state's telehealth investments have set a high standard for improving health care everywhere."

The recognition from the Health Resources and Services Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, was announced during an Oct. 5 news conference in Washington. It includes an initial \$600,000 in funding, with the opportunity for an additional \$2 million over two years. The designation allows UMMC's Center for Telehealth to serve as a national clearinghouse for telehealth research and resources, including technical assistance to other telehealth providers.

The Center for Telehealth connects patients and caregivers to Medical Center health care providers remotely, in real time, using video calls and interactive tools. More than 500,000 patient visits in 69 of the state's 82 counties have been recorded since the center began with just three sites, expanding to more than 200 sites today, not including the homes of patients.

"UMMC's selection as a national Telehealth Center of Excellence is affirmation of our mission and responsibility to bring high-quality health care to all Mississippians, especially those in rural, underserved areas," said Dr. LouAnn Woodward, UMMC vice chancellor for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine.

The Center for Telehealth provides remote, on-site access to caregivers in more than 35 specialties, including urgent care, trauma, mental health, dermatology, cardiology, infectious diseases, and Alzheimer's and dementia care. Pediatric telehealth specialties include remote concussion evaluation, cardiology, neurology, psychiatry, genetics and urology.

Telehealth nurse practitioners are stationed in the emergency departments of 17 rural Mississippi hospitals to treat patients via a multidisciplinary team that includes a certified emergency medicine physician on the UMMC campus.

(Source: UMMC Office of Public Affairs)