

# THE TELEMEDICINE PILOT INVESTMENT PROGRAM

CONNECTING PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

SEPTEMBER 2020

“The outcomes achieved under HPC’s Telemedicine Pilot Investment Program have been remarkable. These pilots make a **clear and convincing case for the expanded use of telehealth** to improve access to behavioral health services. They also demonstrate how beneficial this technology can be in reaching numerous populations, such as isolated older adults, those with a substance use disorder, and children and adolescents, **all without compromising the continuity or quality of care provided.**”

– MARTY COHEN, HPC BOARD VICE-CHAIR AND PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE METROWEST HEALTH FOUNDATION

The Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC) launched the Telemedicine Pilot Investment Program in 2016 to increase access to behavioral health care services using telemedicine. Recognizing critical shortages in behavioral health care across the Commonwealth, the HPC funded interventions:

- **RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CARE:** Home-based telemedicine for home-bound older adults
- **PEDIATRIC PHYSICIAN’S ORGANIZATION AT CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL:** Pediatric clinic-based telemedicine for youth
- **HEYWOOD HOSPITAL:** School-based telemedicine for adolescents
- **UMASS MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER:** Hospital-based telemedicine for patients with substance use disorder

The Telemedicine Pilot Investment Program demonstrated that telemedicine can be an effective modality for expanding access to high-quality behavioral health care for high-need patient populations across a variety of settings. All pilot programs succeeded in expanding timely access to behavioral health care for key target populations, improving the quality of that care, and reducing barriers to obtaining necessary services. The Telemedicine Pilot Investment Program also provided insight into how telemedicine supported partnerships across organizations and clinical disciplines and highlighted important operational considerations for organizations considering implementing their own telemedicine programs.

## THE TELEMEDICINE PILOT INVESTMENT PROGRAM SUPPORTED AWARDEES IN:

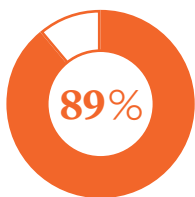
- 1 Demonstrating the promise of telemedicine to address behavioral health care access challenges
- 2 Building partnerships to bring behavioral health services to patients in their care environments and communities
- 3 Implementing comprehensive care delivery models to better serve patients with behavioral health needs

# EXPANDING ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

Access to timely behavioral health services remains a challenge across the Commonwealth. There are not enough behavioral health providers to meet demand, and as a result some patients wait months for an appointment while others must travel significant distances for care. Still others – like adolescents and homebound adults – face practical barriers, including lack of transportation or concerns about missing school or work. The Telemedicine Pilot Investment Program awardees implemented innovative interventions to address these barriers and meet the behavioral health needs of populations that typically lack access to critical behavioral health care.

## 6 MISSED SCHOOL DAYS

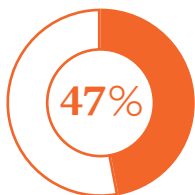
AVOIDED ON AVERAGE PER STUDENT ENROLLED IN THE HEYWOOD PROGRAM



OF ENROLLEES WHO SCREENED POSITIVE FOR DEPRESSION IN THE RIVERSIDE PROGRAM REPORTED FEELING LESS DEPRESSED

## 188 HOSPITALIZATIONS

AT UMASS LED TO INITIATION OR MAINTENANCE OF MEDICATION FOR ADDICTION TREATMENT



REDUCTION IN WAIT TIME FOR PSYCHIATRIC ASSESSMENT FOR PPOC PATIENTS, FROM 37 TO 19.7 DAYS

“It’s a very [...] **rewarding experience**

to be able to meet people who otherwise are not going to be able to be seen by a [psychiatrist]. I have a lot of...case examples of people [whose] **lives were saved** by being put on medication-assisted treatment and being connected to a Suboxone clinic while they were in the hospital because of a **service like ours.**”

– UMASS CLINICIAN

“Having the **quick scheduling** and **save on travel time and expense** has been

huge for our population. Without this option, many patients would be waiting months to get in with a new provider here.”

– PEDIATRIC PHYSICIAN’S ORGANIZATION AT CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL TEAM MEMBER

# IMPACT OF TELEMEDICINE PILOT INITIATIVES ON BROADER CARE DELIVERY TRANSFORMATION

The Telemedicine Pilot Investment Program encouraged broader care delivery transformation among awardees beyond the added access to telemedicine for behavioral health or teleBH. To complement the behavioral health care available to patients, most awardees implemented wraparound services to address patients' health-related social needs and introduced new processes and staff to improve systems of care. Patient and provider satisfaction with the programs demonstrate the positive impact of these care delivery improvements.



## TELEBH OFFERED PROVIDERS A MUCH-NEEDED NEW TOOL TO TREAT ADDICTION.

“[I]t’s been **incredibly gratifying** watching how well our hospital staff do when you give them a tool to treat addictions. They can identify the problem and do something about it. It really has led I think to **better acceptance** of the disease model here, **better compassion** and **less burnout** around helping people with these [addiction] problems.”

– UMASS INVESTMENT DIRECTOR



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## TELEBH COMPLEMENTED EFFORTS TO ADDRESS PATIENTS' HEALTH-RELATED SOCIAL NEEDS.



“The [**school-based**] **clinical sessions fill a very important need in our community**, but the work of the school-based care coordinator with the student and family is extremely effective. The school-based care coordinator works with the student and family to **create a safety net** and **address specific social determinants** that do not allow the family to move forward.”

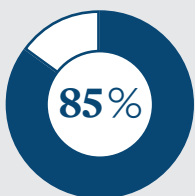
– HEYWOOD TEAM MEMBER

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## TELEBH PROMOTED COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION AMONG MEMBERS OF THE CARE TEAM.

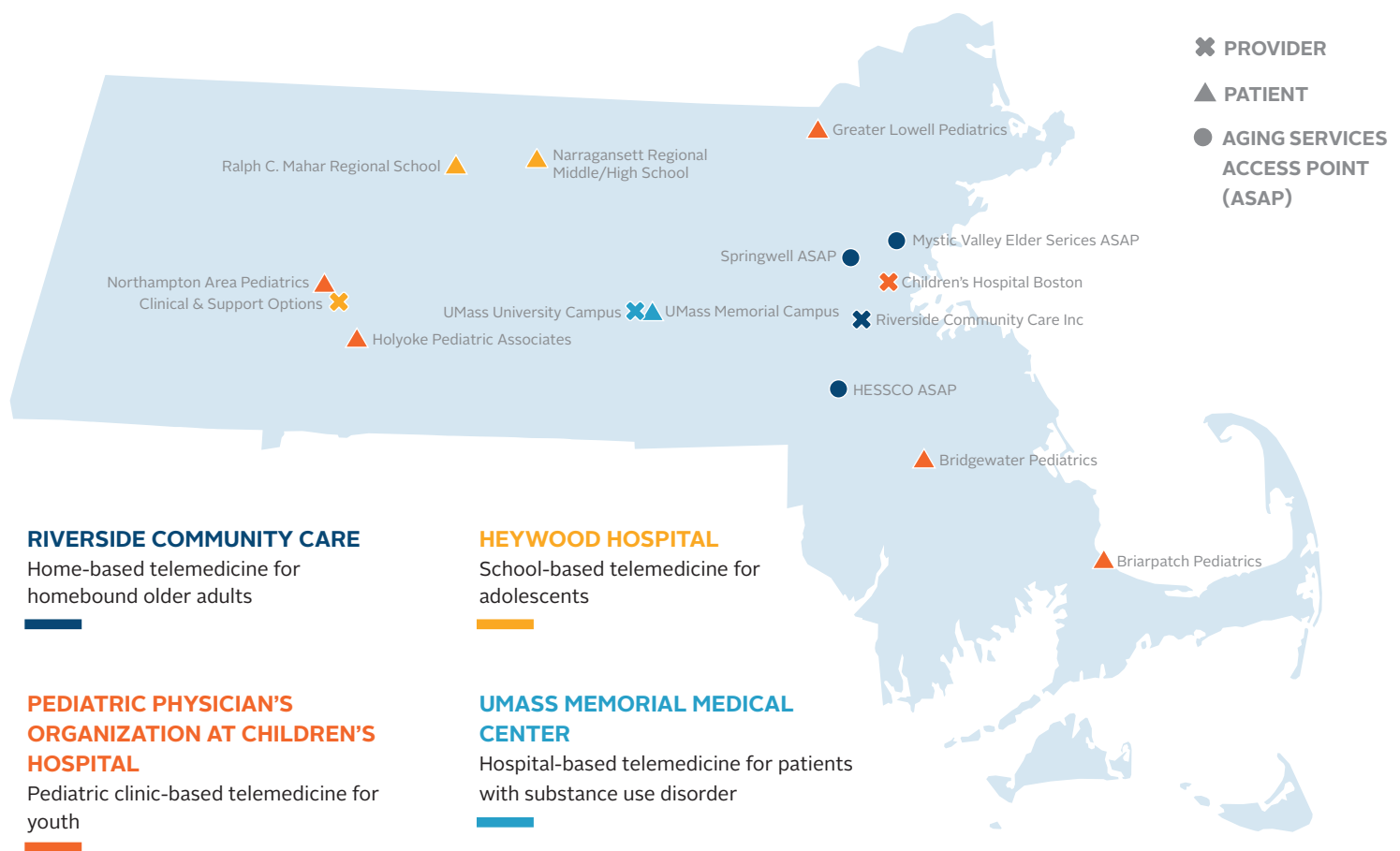
“[T]here’s a real [...] **continuity** now because we do have this **closed loop** between the primary care provider, the patient, and the psychiatrist so there’s a much **better chance of coordinating** that care than if this was done other ways.”

– PEDIATRIC PHYSICIAN'S ORGANIZATION AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL PROJECT MANAGER



OR MORE OF SURVEYED PATIENTS AND FAMILIES EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE CARE THEY RECEIVED

# TELEMEDICINE PILOT INVESTMENT PROGRAM SITES



## ABOUT THE MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH POLICY COMMISSION

The Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC), established in 2012, is an independent state agency that develops policy to reduce health care cost growth and improve the quality of patient care. The HPC's mission is to advance a more transparent, accountable, and equitable health care system through its independent policy leadership and innovative investment programs. The HPC's goal is better health and better care – at a lower cost – for all residents across the Commonwealth.



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