



Where Care Changes Lives

Telehealth Pilot at Burlington Senior Center



COVID-19 Response Fund

Communities are stronger when working together. Take the Burlington Senior Providers

Group, launched by the City of Burlington's Community and Economic Development Office, in which city leaders and representatives from senior centers, healthcare organizations and other stakeholders together explore ways to better address seniors' needs.

UVM Health Network Senior Community Relations Officer Karen Vastine has been a regular participant, bringing resources and expertise from the UVM Medical Center. "The strong collaboration and shared support forged by this group has recently allowed us to take action related to a major concern during COVID-19: the impact of isolation on seniors' health."

Heineberg Community Senior Center Executive Director Beth Hammond explains. "Some struggle with barriers such as lack of transportation, funds, and the physical and mental strength necessary to seek medical advice or address their loneliness. The pandemic's many unknowns have exacerbated these barriers."

Offering Telehealth at senior centers was proposed to help meet this need.

The idea took off, but Telehealth—which offers patients access to health care through virtual visits—requires space, computer equipment, broadband, training and staff.

"We needed to choose a center that was ready to pilot this idea," said Sarah Kessler, UVM Health Network Telehealth Senior Program Strategist, "so that we could determine what's needed and what works. Then we hope to roll out the program regionally and help other community-based organizations get started."

The pilot is rapidly taking shape at Burlington's Heineberg Community Senior Center, with a target launch in early 2021. Along with support from pilot partners, the UVM Medical Center's COVID-19 Response Fund will help purchase Telehealth equipment for the pilot at the Center.

"Telehealth is a way to connect people," Sarah adds. "This is a hard time. We're losing some of that physical connection and if we can re-establish some of that connectedness in new ways, we need to."

To Learn More

Susie Posner-Jones
Susie.Posner-Jones@uvmhealth.org
802-309-2174 (mobile)



"Telehealth has proved to have a tremendous impact on access to care through the health crisis. Seniors are among those who face more barriers to care with Telehealth. We are fortunate to have this partnership to learn how we can overcome these challenges for our patients."

– Todd Young, UVM Health Network Director, Telehealth Services

Telehealth Pilot Partners:

Age Well

Champlain Senior Center

Computers for Change

Heineberg Community Senior Center

Helping and Nurturing Diverse Seniors (HANDS)

Support and Services at Home (SASH)

Technology for Tomorrow

The University of Vermont

The University of Vermont Health Network