

# Telepsychiatry & Distance Learning: *Models that Work*



## An Overview of the Alabama Coalition for a Healthier Black Belt Project

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# Disclosure

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Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation

# Agenda

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- I. Black Belt Statistics
- II. Advantages/Benefits of Using Technology
- III. "Before You Begin..." Start-up Considerations
- IV. Challenges
- V. Sustainability

# Our Partners

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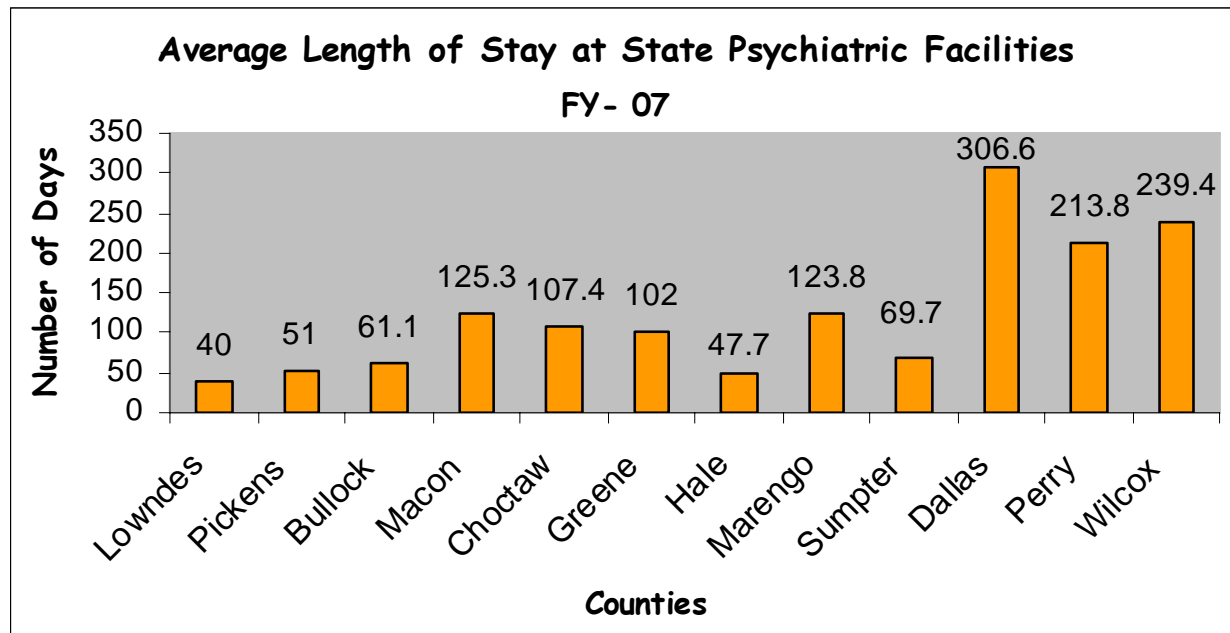
- University of Alabama at Birmingham Dept. of Psychiatry
- University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences
- Alabama Dept. of Mental Health/Mental Retardation
- National Alliance on Mental Illness-Alabama
- Community Care Network
- West Alabama Mental Health Center
- Cahaba Center for Mental Health
- Montgomery Area Mental Health Authority

# Alabama's Black Belt Region

- Alabama's Black Belt Region is comprised of twelve of the most impoverished, scarcely resourced counties in the state.



# Alabama's Black Belt Region



# Alabama Black Belt Region

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- These 13 counties have the highest concentration of Medicaid eligibility across the general population (30% or greater).
- Bullock 33%
- Butler 32%
- Conecuh 30%
- Dallas 41%
- Greene 40%
- Hale 33%
- Wilcox 48%
- Lowndes 34%
- Macon 30%
- Marengo 30%
- Perry 44%
- Pickens 30%
- Sumter 40%



# What is telepsychiatry?

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- Telepsychiatry is a specifically defined form of video conferencing that can provide psychiatric services to patients living in remote locations or otherwise underserved areas.

*Definition as stated by the American Psychiatric Association*

# Benefits of Telepsychiatry

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- Telepsychiatry is currently one of the most effective ways to increase access to psychiatric care for individuals living in underserved areas.
- Services may be used for:
  - Diagnosis/assessment
  - Medication monitoring
  - Consultative services
  - Individual/Group Therapy

# Other Benefits of Telepsychiatry

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- Increases range of clinical services being provided
- Increases accessibility to psychiatric care
- Reduces no-show rates
- Increases revenue from reduced travel expenses/  
leasing fees

# Initial Considerations

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- Develop a strategic vision of what you want to accomplish with technology!



# ACHBB Objectives

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- Establish nine telepsychiatry clinics in Alabama's Black Belt region by the end of 2008
- Build capacity among mental health and primary care providers
  - ☑ Monitor risk factors for Metabolic Syndrome over time
  - ☑ Improved mental health and general health of patients receiving integrated services
- Develop protocols for more efficient discharge planning/residential admissions between the mental health centers and state hospitals.
- Reduce admissions/length of stay at state facilities

UAB Researchers will also be collecting data from patients, staff members, and clinicians on satisfaction and acceptability of telepsychiatry.

# Initial Considerations

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- Consider the following **BEFORE** you implement:
  - ✓ Financial Considerations
  - ✓ Legal/Liability Concerns
  - ✓ Clinical Aspects
  - ✓ Training/Educational Needs
  - ✓ Equipment Specifications
  - ✓ Environmental Considerations

# Initial Considerations

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- Take reasonable steps to insure you:
  - ✓ are not "reinventing the wheel."
  - ✓ obtain appropriate feedback from clinicians every step of the way.
  - ✓ get equipment that meets the exclusive needs of your organization.

The equipment you utilize for telemedicine does not have to be **BETTER** than in-person services.

# Challenges

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- Network infrastructure/connectivity in rural areas
- Firewall/Gatekeeping Issues
- Manpower
- Reimbursement
- Community acceptance
- Legal issues
- Credentialing

# Sustainability

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- There are a number of grant programs available through the manufacturers of video conferencing equipment.
- Medicare Improvements for Patient and Providers Act of 2008 (H.R. 6331)
- Technology Service Center

# Telepsychiatry is here...and it works!



West Alabama Mental Health Center Executive Director, Kelley Barnes, in Demopolis, AL has a video conference with the University of Alabama Chairman of Psychiatry, Dr. Ulzen, in Tuscaloosa, AL.

# Contact Us

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