

Telehealth / Telemedicine in the Central Sierra

A Final Update: February 2015

Healthcare providers in the Central Sierra Region are utilizing telehealth and telemedicine as a component of the services they provide. However, when asked about current internet connectivity the most frequent response is “adequate”.

This from SRMC (Sonora Regional Medical Center) IT Site Director, Dana VonAllmen; “Our existing infrastructure, while adequate, is far from optimal. We have issues relating to bandwidth availability and speed of service.”

SRMC is one of the region’s largest healthcare service providers with clinic locations in both Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties as well as a 152 bed hospital in Sonora. SRMC have announced plans and purchased property for construction of a Cancer Center in Sonora. SRMC is part of the Adventist Health organization.

MTMC (Mark Twain Medical Center) are committed to utilizing technology for patient care. From MTMC Vice President and COO Larry Cornish; “We use robots that are “driven” remotely that link our patients to specialists who are not physically at MTMC and it is extremely successful.” Asked about CTN (California Telehealth Network) Mr. Cornish responded; “We joined CTN about 5 years ago and set them loose about 3 years ago. We never utilized them because we had broadband connectivity everywhere with our internal network.” Here’s a link to more detailed information outlining how MTMC is utilizing technology:

http://www.marktwainmedicalcenter.org/Medical_Services/239159

MTMC operates clinics and a hospital in Calaveras County. They are part of the Dignity Health organization.

Sutter Amador Hospital is a member of the Sutter Health organization and operates several clinic locations in Amador County in addition to the 52-bed acute care hospital in Jackson. Their current internet service provider is Comcast however, the hospital in Jackson has redundancy as Volcano Communications has fiber in the building.

John C Fremont Healthcare is the primary provider of services in Mariposa County, operating several clinics as well as a hospital in the city of Mariposa. Primary internet service provider is Sierra Tel Internet. In addition, John C. Fremont subscribes to services provided by CTN.

Additional results - most responding mentioned plans for expansion of telehealth services and need for additional internet capacity (bandwidth). In addition frustration was expressed regarding delays in completion of the CVIN project - many providers are planning to utilize the fiber provided by CVIN for expanding broadband needs.