

KENTUCKY TELEHEALTH CONSORTIUM

Healthcare Connect Fund Network Plan

Consortium Overview

The Kentucky Telehealth Consortium (KTC) is a regional healthcare consortium developed by Connections Telehealth Consortium (CTC) in cooperation with healthcare providers in Kentucky. KTC was developed for purposes of serving to improve the collaboration, information exchange, and telehealth opportunities for healthcare organizations in the Bluegrass State. KTC is comprised of both rural and urban locations, which allows for the consortium to meet the needs of patients at any location within the network, even if those patients have to travel to an urban location for specialized care.

KTC, established in 2014, continues to grow its membership. Currently KTC represents between fifty and one-hundred rural and urban healthcare providers, but we expect to grow by an order of magnitude as we demonstrate both proof of concept and the improvements in information exchange.

Network Goals and Objectives

The ultimate goal of the Kentucky Telehealth Consortium is to build a single consolidated network platform that will permit member HCP's to communicate privately over a quality-of-service enabled network. The network will increase the amounts and types of healthcare information that can be exchanged in order for the healthcare community to more effectively interoperate to provide holistic healthcare to the communities they serve.

We recognize, however, that it may not be feasible to create a single consolidated network platform in this phase of the project and that the overall design needs may change as additional participants join the consortium. Therefore, the anticipated implementation of the first phase of the KTC project will be a "network of networks" defined as private health care system networks interconnected to other private health care system networks via a combination of private network connections and virtual private network (VPN) connections over the Internet.

Aggregation Strategy

The network is designed to facilitate current and future information exchange and telehealth services. KTC will implement private networks and Internet connectivity to all member HCPs. The consortium simplifies the RFP and implementation process and improves the ability of member HCPs to share information through private WAN links or VPN as each member HCP chooses.

The short-term strategy is to make sharing services feasible while ensuring that the HCP can operate independently as desired or needed as health operations and financial considerations vary. The design allows for each HCP to opt-in to shared services as each desires. In order to

continue to grow and support collaboration over the long term, the consortium's strategy will be to continue to explore new and emerging technologies that may be implemented on the network, and will continue to assess the needs of its members and improve collaboration opportunities over time.

Leveraging Existing Technology Strategy

The consortium network is currently a combination of older and newer technologies that are being used to efficiently and cost-effectively interconnect the member HCP's.

Going forward, KTC anticipates that some combination of older and newer technologies will be used to efficiently and cost-effectively interconnect the member HCP's. KTC continues to implement a network that will permit interconnection of various networks that may be on different technology platforms.

The consortium wants to ensure that the strategy underlying this project permits for scalability and evolution to a future vision of improved collaboration and information sharing between healthcare providers. Our ultimate goal is a single platform interconnecting all participating HCPs; however, we expect that the initial implementation will likely look like multiple vendor networks that are interconnected.

Impact on Healthcare Delivery

Interconnecting healthcare providers will improve their ability to interoperate and serve the healthcare needs of their constituent populations with the end result being an improved patient experience. A high quality, reliable, and scalable network, will permit healthcare providers (HCPs) to communicate better. This will lead to quick, reliable, and secure access to patient data through consolidated EHR systems, quicker access to cloud-based application services, and increased access to internal and external healthcare related resources.

The network will provide for the flexibility to integrate new technologies as they emerge and will be capable of scaling as bandwidth needs increase. It will create new telemedicine opportunities, permitting remote treatment, reducing travel requirements, and providing a less-stressful and better overall experience for both patients and healthcare practitioners.

The consortium creates efficiencies and economies of scale, and will make use of financial tools to reduce overall operating costs, bringing to bear a consolidated voice with consolidated buying power. KTC will make use of the RFP process to select vendors that cost-effectively meet the network goals. Lastly, the consortium and its member HCPs will benefit greatly from the Healthcare Connect Fund subsidies, permitting them to improve their network while decreasing operating costs.

Project Leadership & Experience

The KTC project is managed by CTC. CTC is a non-profit consortium management group operating in seven states, and is the lead entity representing the KTC project. CTC has engaged third-party consultant HealthConnect Networks (HCN) to develop, manage, and implement the KTC project plan.

The KTC Leadership team includes representatives from CTC, including:

- **Brian Thibeau** CTC President
- **Timothy Smith** CTC Treasurer
- **Red Hutchinson** CTC Vice President

The KTC Project Management team will be led by William Jenkins, Senior Project Manager for HCN. HCN has been instrumental in the design, development, planning, and implementation of many healthcare networks throughout the United States. Recent projects include: a healthcare consortium of over three hundred HCPs in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont; a network design for a healthcare network in California; and design and implementation of many multi-site health care provider networks to support healthcare IT and telehealth.

Work Plan & Schedule

KTC anticipates a number of projects over the next year as additional healthcare providers and networks are added to the scope of the Kentucky Telehealth Consortium. For purposes of easing the management of these projects, KTC plans to implement these projects on a per-health system basis. Start dates are uncertain at this time as each individual health system makes the decision to move forward individually. However, KTC anticipates a Work Plan and Schedule for each individual project similar to the following:

Project Milestone	Time to Complete
Data Gathering	30 Days
RFP Development	15 Days
Form 461 Submission	1 Day
USAC Posts RFP	14 Days
Bidding Period	28 Days
Evaluation Period	7 Days
Contract Negotiation	30 Days
Implementation	Up to 90 Days

Budget

Prior to the competitive bidding process a known budget cannot be ascertained. KTC anticipates that a pro forma budget will grow by an order of magnitude as additional participants join the consortium and connect to the network. We expect that several factors will influence the final budget.

1. The RFP process itself will tend to reduce the annual budget as service providers offer competitive bids.
2. Some HCPs will purchase more robust services, particularly as they move from low bandwidth asymmetrical circuits to enterprise-class symmetrical services. This will tend to increase the annual budget.
3. KTC is currently processing Consortium participation applications for over 150 additional HCP's. This will have a significant impact on the annual budget.

Pursuant to 47 C.F.R § 54.633, the required 35% contribution from eligible sources is currently, and will continue to be part of each HCP's annual IT expense budget.