**Project Aim: Increase telehealth services at Zufall in order to enhance access to comprehensive medical care**

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| **Timeline** |
| ***Date:*** | ***Activity*** |
| February 24, 2020 | Integrated Services and Telehealth Coordinator (ISTC) was hired |
| February 24, 2020 | Core team established containing the ISTC, Telehealth Champion, Chief IT Officer, CMO, and the Director of Behavioral Health. |
| March 16, 2020 | Need for telehealth became acute because of COVID-19 and Telehealth program was established. - Behavioral Health team trained on Healow and patients were reached to access Healow |
| March 18, 2020 | Switched from Healow to Zoom for Healthcare |
| March 19, 2020 | Initial medical visit with Market Street Mission and 1 Zufall provider |
| March 20, 2020 | 9 patients were successfully seen via telehealth  |
| March 20, 2020 | Policies & Procedures, Workflows & Staff training developed  |
| March 23, 2020 | All Zufall staff were trained and telehealth teams established at each site. |
| March 31, 2020 | Zufall had a total of 967 telemedicine visits, 144 tele-behavioral health visits and 29 other televisits.  |
| May 7, 2020 | Telemedicine Page available on Zufall website |
| May 13-20, 2020 | Doximity tested and used by 2 providers as an alternative telehealth platform |
| May 31, 2020 | 10,850 patients served and 13,899 visits conducted through telehealth since initiation of telehealth program  |
| June 1, 2020 | Increase of providers switching to Doximity  |

**Telehealth Program Development and Implementation**

*Zufall’s highly impactful Telehealth implementation has allowed us to ensure patient access to primary care in a time of pandemic.*In mid- March 2020, Zufall implemented Telehealth (TH) in response to urgent need brought on by the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. We began by following an implementation plan that had been in the works for a few years, during which time Zufall has been assembling its technology and developing policies and procedures with the help of Federal, State and Private Foundation Funding. Our team proved to be quite nimble in meeting the daily challenges encountered and in discerning when it was necessary to pivot to alternative solutions. At this time, Zufall is seeing the same number of patients via Telehealth and in-person that we would typically see in the office prior to the pandemic.

Initial infrastructure prior to the pandemic, and Zufall leadership’s foresight and investments in Telehealth systems and technologies, allowed for Zufall to be prepared to rapidly implement a telehealth program across all sites. Establishing a core team to develop, implement and monitor the telehealth program allowed for swift action upon the initiation of COVID-19. Zufall has an established IT team, which their flexibility and support is important for the infrastructure and success of the telehealth program. The initial telehealth platform known as Healow was available through Zufall’s electronic health record system eClinicalWorks (ECW). Unfortunately, Healow could not handle or meet Zufall’s need for telehealth. Zufall overcame this barrier by collaborating as a team to identify other telehealth platforms, such as Zoom for Healthcare.

Working with Zufall Morristown’s lead practitioner and designated Telemedicine Champion on the workflow for the televisits and Zoom, we progressed through initial visits with Zufall’s long-time collaborating partner, a shelter for persons experiencing homelessness. Once we had success with our first telemedicine visit, we then identified nine patients who were interested in TH for the very next day. Dr. Bishop collaborated closely with his team to determine those workflows that worked best at their site. The public health emergency situation left little time for research and development. Zufall’s BH team and Dr. Bishop were flexible and communicative, and the emerging TH program developed rapidly, with efficient and effective design and redesign of workflows. Leadership provided guidance on documentation, regulatory requirements and billing procedures and developed relevant policies. Provider staff reviewed documentation requirements, guidelines, best practices on telemedicine and developed and implemented appropriate telemedicine templates. With a remarkable team effort, Zufall rapidly developed a formal training for staff and operational procedures for telehealth. Within a week, Zufall providers logged 967 telemedicine visits and 114 tele-behavioral health visits.

Flexible and dedicated providers and staff allowed for extra communication, swift action, and successful implementation of the telehealth program. Loosened federal and state regulations allowed for expanded use of telehealth and increased access for patients. All staff have accepted telehealth as a method to reach their patients, and conduct visits allowing for an increase in patient access that was impacted by the pandemic. Through telehealth patients can be seen at any Zufall site and do not need to wait to be seen by a provider resulting in an increase to access and number of visits. Outreach for telehealth has been widespread. Zufall’s developed helpful telehealth guidance for patients that has been posted to Zufall’s website. We have also recorded on an iPhone and Android how to download Zoom and then how to access the meeting. Messages are being sent to patients, informing them about the option for telehealth and instructing them to download the app. Increased communication and feedback among staff have enhanced the monitoring and evaluation of the telehealth program. As a result, teamwork and collaboration between the providers, MA and patient representative staff was enhanced by this process. Zufall’s patients have been flexible, willing and engaged in contributing necessary feedback for developing the TH workflows. Patients report enjoyment and satisfaction with TH visits. Zufall’s telehealth program accomplishments include the uptake of telehealth throughout all Zufall sites, increased patient access during COVID-19, retention of care and sustainability on number of visits conducted.

**Telehealth Program Infrastructure**

Zufall Health Center provides real-time, live interactive video and audio consultation through the telehealth program. Zufall’s telehealth program includes an integration of technological and regulatory infrastructure. Zufall’s network has the appropriate bandwidth to conduct the telehealth visits effectively. A secure broadband internet connection ensures stable and quality telehealth visits. The hardware components incorporated in Zufall’s telehealth program consist of computers and tablets with cameras and audio of sufficient quality to support clear video communication. Video connections are made through platforms for a video interface through a basic, direct to consumer system in which the patient uses a home computer, tablet, or smart phone. At Zufall, Zoom for Healthcare and Doximity are the secured, HIPAA compliant platforms used for telehealth. These telehealth platforms easily integrated with all hardware components at Zufall. Technical support staff are easily accessible at Zufall and can help answer any questions regarding the telehealth program. The support staff insure stable, secure internet connectivity and help with technical/hardware problems to prevent interruptions to workflow and patient care. Staff training has also been an integral piece of the telehealth infrastructure. Staff are trained on the use of telehealth technology, regulations related to telehealth, and proper documentation for visits. Developing platform workflows, learning modules and trainings are a continuous effort allowing Zufall staff to stay up to date with telehealth regulations and Zufall’s telehealth program.

**Summary**

Zufall’s ability to transform its practice, within a week’s time, to offer telemedicine visits to our patients is the result of the organization’s adoption of the Care Model, the Model for Improvement and the PDSA cycles as its framework for quality and performance improvement. Zufall’s staff, at all sites, constitute an empowered and engaged team that is accustomed to innovation, collaboration and challenges, thus making it possible for the organization to continue to provide timely, efficient and effective care to its patients during a pandemic. As of June 30, 2020, Zufall has served over 13,000 patients with over 18,000 televisits, and will continue to provide primary care using this effective, patient-centered and successful platform in the future.