Specialists use telemedicine for pregnancy consultations
by Cynthia Johnson

While some companies give birth to new ideas, like Apple® releasing of the iPad™, Chattanooga-based BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation has an idea that helps women give birth. In January 2009, the nonprofit organization funded a $1.8 million, three-year pilot project to determine whether telemedicine technology could provide effective perinatal consulting services to women who have high-risk pregnancies and live in rural areas of Eastern Tennessee.

Maternal fetal medicine specialists and health-care professionals at Regional Obstetric Consultants (ROC) of Chattanooga and Knoxville offer care to women with high-risk pregnancies. However, women living in the valleys and mountains of Eastern Tennessee would frequently miss appointments because of the travel and time required to get to the offices. These missed appointments sometimes resulted in increased health-related problems in both mother and child.

To improve patient outcomes and access to care, ROC collaborated with the nonprofit Community Health Network to form Solutions to Obstetrics in Rural Counties (STORC). The goal of the BlueCross BlueShield–funded project is to use videoconferencing technology by New York City–based TANDBERG (www.tandberg.com) to connect rural patients with ROC specialists.

“It’s about bringing an individual with highly specialized knowledge and being able to access them in a very timely fashion,” says Joe D’Lorio, manager of healthcare services for TANDBERG.

Have specialist, don’t travel
An obstetrician may refer a patient to STORC because she has a high-risk condition, such as multiple gestation, diabetes, or a suspected anomaly with the fetus. Even though BlueCross Blue Shield of Tennessee Health Foundation funds the project, it is open to any patient referred by any doctor regardless of the patient’s insurance situation.

“We’re so grateful to the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation for providing
Telemedicine
continued from p. 1

funds for programs like this,” says Debbie Lance, director of the STORC project. “There are organizations out there that are looking to be able to help.”

ROC uses a computer-based system to schedule appointments just as other offices do, but with the added variable of different locations. It blocks time for the remote locations, and nurse practitioners can make adjustments depending on patient volume and need.

On the day of the appointment, a nurse practitioner and a sonographer from ROC meet with the patient at his or her local hospital or physician’s office.

“We can be in a hospital setting where they give us an exam area to set up the equipment, or we can be in a physician’s office,” says Lance. The equipment at the remote location consists of videoconferencing technology, a display monitor, and a laptop.

During a typical visit, the nurse practitioner takes the patient’s history and the sonographer performs the ultrasound. Then they transmit the ultrasound images to one of the hub sites, where the consulting physician views the images on an oversized screen in an exam room.

The consulting physician can look at the patient, the nurse practitioner, and the sonographer on a videoconferencing screen and review the ultrasound images with them. It’s also possible for the specialist to guide the sonographer to take additional views of the fetus with the ultrasound.

Bringing specialty services to the patient’s location has made a huge difference in reducing the number of appointments missed. “Patients are compliant with actually keeping that appointment,” Lance says. Since the launch of the project, STORC has logged a mere five missed appointments by mothers who had already delivered their babies at their hometown hospitals.

Providing accessibility to specialist care so patients can deliver at their local hospital is one of the goals of the program, and, according to Lance, the project has had “tremendous success” in this area. “Normally, the outcome would be that they wouldn’t necessarily get the care they needed,” she says. “Most of these babies would probably have to be transported for delivery. The fact that they’re able to stay with their support system in their local hospital is amazing.”

Thinking beyond telemedicine

In addition to consults with specialists, the telemedicine tools also allow genetic counselors and diabetc educators to connect with patients. This eliminates the wait time between appointments with the counselor or educator, the specialist, and the referring obstetrician. It also eliminates the use of letters and phone calls to communicate a patient’s status.

“It’s the immediacy of bringing that genetic counselor in and having the doctor, the specialist, the patient, and the
genetic counselor all talking about patient-centric issues wherever they may be,” says D’Lorio, who describes it as a “tremendous value proposition.”

Hometown obstetricians are also beginning to attend events and earn continuing medical education (CME) credits using the technology. “If you consider a physician in a little town, there may only be two obstetricians there,” says Lance. “This means they have to share calls for each other. It would be very difficult for them to get out to a conference in San Francisco to get the CMEs they need.”

STORC, recognizing the need for such education services, recently completed its first grand rounds across the network. It brought a speaker to the ROC Chattanooga location and had both live and remote event participants.

“We had about 11 different locations which were linked via the telemedicine connectivity,” says Lance. “They were watching real time. They were able to ask questions. They were able to get CME credit for it and it’s right there in their local area.”

Over the next year and a half, Lance says STORC will expand this program and hold events more frequently to help further relationships between specialists and physicians involved in the project.

Nurse practitioners have identified another possible application for the technology. They have suggested networking patients from several locations for an evening event where they could talk with one another about their common concerns. Lance says it would allow patients who share diagnoses to realize that they’re not alone.

According to Lance, some of the facilities may not have had any telemedicine services prior to the project. “It has opened a door for them to explore other ways they could apply this technology, and we’re helping them with that,” she says. For example, the Tullahoma site recently used its videoconferencing tools to connect an overseas military father with his wife’s hometown hospital so he could “attend” the birth of his child.

“We see video communications really streamlining and changing the way a number of businesses do work,” says D’Lorio. “We see that telemedicine is having an impact in changing the way that healthcare is delivered in just a very positive way.”

A virtual handshake

When patients learn that their specialist will be using telemedicine services for their appointment, the typical reaction is, “What is it going to cost me?” For example, one patient’s spouse commented that the services made it possible for him to be present for his wife’s ultrasound without taking time off work; however, in the middle of the visit, he asked whether the services were going to cost him more, says Lance.

“We were able to say no,” she says. Then the clinicians pointed out that the appointment would be less expensive for the couple because it eliminated their travel expenses.

Satisfaction surveys reveal that patients are pleased with the improved access to care, says Lance. One may think that the experience would be anything but intimate, but patients supported the use of videoconferencing tools, she says.

In fact, one nurse practitioner reported that at the end of an appointment, a patient stood to shake the hand of a specialist with whom she was “meeting.”

“You’re that connected and it’s that real to them,” says Lance.

Hometown hospitals and referring physicians have been equally pleased and appreciative of the services, she says. The referring physicians have built relationships with ROC specialists, and they feel comfortable reaching out to them should they need to discuss a patient’s case further.

From credentialing to reimbursement

Lance is responsible for building the relationship between the specialists and local obstetricians—discussing their needs and describing how the program will work. She also works on credentialing ROC clinicians who provide care and make decisions for patients at the remote hospitals. (Credentialing is not necessary if the appointment occurs in a physician’s office or a clinic.)

“The business of healthcare mandates that medical professionals be licensed in the state in which they’re delivering medical care and that they are credential-ed and verified with medical centers,” says D’Lorio, adding that telehealth must conform to those rules as well.
Adding services and onboarding others

“We see a lot of programs emerging that really illustrate bringing the right talent to the right place at the right time and the value proposition behind that,” says D’Lorio.

For example, STORC recently added neonatology to its offerings because of the success it has experienced delivering perinatal services. Now, a neonatologist can look at a baby born at a rural hospital and determine whether the hospital needs to transport the baby for care or whether the baby can continue to receive care at the hospital.

“Neonatology is one of the medical specialties that might be prevalent in the academic university, but in the rural hospitals and even in the suburban hospitals, it’s a hard specialty to maintain,” says D’Lorio. “Video has become a wonderful mechanism to provide it.”

STORC is also sharing its best practices with other communities interested in developing similar programs in places such as North Carolina and Georgia.

“It’s something that we’re pioneering along with other areas around the country, and we’re certainly willing to help any areas who have questions,” says Lance. “We’re happy to network and share all of the information that we’re learning. It is the way of the future, and it seems to make a difference.”

On May 26, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) published a proposed rule in the Federal Register—and opened it to public comment—that could simplify this credentialing process for hospitals. The rule states that hospitals, including critical access hospitals (CAH), will soon be able to use credentialing and privileging information about telemedicine providers from the remote location. Previously, CMS allowed hospitals and CAHs to accept credentialing information about telemedicine providers from the distant site, but not privileging information.

Under current CMS regulations, hospitals receiving telemedicine services must privilege each physician or practitioner providing services to their patients as if the practitioners were on-site. This process had been simplified: Hospitals that were accredited by The Joint Commission (formerly JCAHO) were deemed to also have met Medicare’s Conditions of Participation—including credentialing and privileging requirements—under the Commission’s statutory deeming authority.

But with the passage of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, the statutory recognition of The Joint Commission’s hospital accreditation program is ending effective July 15. With this change, small hospitals and CAHs using telemedicine services could face the burden of privileging specialty physicians that academic medical centers make available to them.

“We’re glad to hear that there is a change because that will help us and many other telemedicine providers,” says Lance. “There used to be reciprocity for different Joint Commission-accredited hospitals. Medicare was saying as of July 15 this year they weren’t going to allow that. They’re sort of putting it back in place for the purpose of telemedicine.”

In terms of reimbursement, the STORC program receives payment for services from all but one carrier, which may be experiencing a paperwork glitch. Lance states that all of the other patient insurers are paying and that they are not experiencing any problems.

D’Lorio describes reimbursement as an “emerging issue.” Twelve states currently mandate that private insurers reimburse for telemedicine services, he says. Medicare and Medicaid programs work on a national level, so they create their own reimbursement rules.

Long-term goals

At the end of the STORC project’s first year, the specialists at the two hub sites had served nearly 150 patients at five remote sites in Cookeville, Tullahoma, McMinnville, Newport, and Winchester, TN. In the first quarter of this year, patient volume increased by 229%. STORC has already set up connections at two more locations in Jellico, TN, and Dalton, GA, and will start providing patient care in those locations soon.

The long-term goals of the project are to:

- Connect 11 rural sites in Tennessee
- Reduce cost of care
- Reduce unnecessary patient transportation
- Reduce unnecessary hospitalizations
- Reduce days of neonatal ICU stays
- Lower infant and maternal mortality rates
Joint Commission pushes back telemedicine requirements

The Joint Commission has pushed back its plan to implement CMS telemedicine standards for hospitals (both acute and critical access) until March 2011, according to an official announcement from the accrediting body.

Originally slated for implementation July 15, The Joint Commission (formerly JCAHO) had intended to add new elements of performance that would bring the organization’s requirements more in line with CMS standards for telemedicine services, specifically for the credentialing and privileging of telehealth providers.

CMS issued an extension to The Joint Commission because CMS has proposed changes to telemedicine requirements that will affect the organization’s own standards and change the requirements The Joint Commission intends to implement, according to a HealthLeaders Media article.

The accrediting body has maintained a belief that CMS’ telemedicine requirements did not provide sufficient improvement of quality or safety to warrant the amount of work they placed upon hospitals for compliance.

Hospitals can comment on the proposed CMS rule changes until July 26.

Three Philadelphia-area awards for electronic patient records

Three Philadelphia-area healthcare groups were awarded federal money to adopt electronic patient records. The recipients were the Health Federation of Philadelphia, $327,169; Southern New Jersey Family Medical Centers, Inc., Hammonton, $3 million; and Southbridge Medical Advisory Council, Inc., Wilmington, $558,114, reports The Philadelphia Inquirer.

They are among 45 groups nationally that will receive a total of $83.9 million from the 2009 economic stimulus package.

Should doctors be exempt from the FTC’s Red Flags Rule?

The Federal Trade Commission’s (FTC) Red Flags Rule requires businesses offering credit to come up with a written policy for finding, preventing, and dealing with identity theft.

According to The Wall Street Journal’s Health Blog, the law is controversial and has been delayed several times, including when the FTC pushed off the implementation originally scheduled for June 1 until December 31.

The American Bar Association sued last year, saying that the law shouldn’t apply to lawyers, and a judge agreed.

Now, the AMA is making a case for exemption. The group and two others—the American Osteopathic Association and the Medical Society of the District of Columbia—sued the FTC, arguing that physicians should not be subject to the rule, the blog reports.

CMS updates telemedicine guidelines

Hospitals and critical access hospitals (CAH) will soon be able to use credentialing and privileging information about telemedicine providers.

iPhone 4 contains helpful features for healthcare professionals

The recent unveiling of the iPhone® 4 is good news for those in healthcare. According to a HealthLeaders Media article, the latest version of the smartphone contains high-definition video and four times as many pixels. These advances may help drive medical apps for things such as:

» Viewing high-resolution surgical procedure training
» Listening to digital heart sound recordings
» Analyzing 3-D scientific images
» Researching clinical trials applications
**GE invests $5 million in heart disease test maker**

General Electric Co.’s healthcare unit has announced a partnership with CardioDx, which develops genetic tests that are used in diagnosing heart disease. According to an Associated Press article, GE Healthcare, which makes diagnostic and medical imaging products, said it invested $5 million in CardioDx through an equity fund that invests in healthcare technology companies. CardioDx makes genetic tests that can be used in treatment of people with conditions including heart failure and coronary artery disease.

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**Work group suggests mandating encryption for provider information exchanges**

During its May 19 meeting, a privacy/security work group for the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology reported that encryption should be mandatory for one-on-one exchanges between providers regarding treatments.

According to a HealthLeaders Media article, the work group from the monthly HIT Policy Committee suggested that those exchanges include:

- Encryption (no ability for facilitator to access content). Encryption ideally should be required when there is potential for transmitted data to be exposed (mandated through meaningful use/certification criteria or HIPAA Security Rule modification).
- Limits on identifiable (or potentially identifiable) information in the message.
- Identification and authentication.

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**Healthcare IT providers to merge**

AllscriptsMisys Healthcare Solutions, Inc., and Eclipsys Corp. have agreed to merge in an all-stock deal valued at about $1.3 billion.

According to a Wall Street Journal article, the move creates an entity whose combined technology will make it easier for hospitals, nursing homes, and doctors’ offices to share patients’ health information electronically.

Under the terms of the deal, Eclipsys shareholders will receive 1.2 AllscriptsMisys shares for each Eclipsys share.

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**Using the Web to curb waiting room times**

A new Web-based tool seeks to help patients spend less time in the waiting room before seeing their doctor. The application, called MedWaitTime, allows patients to check before their appointment to see whether their doctor is running late, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Patients can access the site up to two hours ahead of their appointment. If
the doctor is running late, patients can be instructed to arrive later than their scheduled appointment time. Patients can also enter their cell phone number into the system to receive text message alerts.

MGMA tells HHS new EMR disclosure requirements ‘onerous’

The Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) told the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that the new HIPAA disclosure requirements for electronic medical records (EMR) are burdensome, unnecessary, costly, and may discourage physicians from adopting the new technology.

According to a HealthLeaders Media article, the 2003 HIPAA Privacy Rule permits patients to request an accounting of disclosures of their protected health information. However, a new provision expands the type of information required in this accounting, and medical groups using EMRs are now required to track all disclosures of patient information, including disclosures for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations.

MGMA highlighted five critical concerns:

» Administrative burden on physician practices
» Low volume of patient requests for accounting reports
» Burdensome and unnecessary accounting for treatment disclosures
» Burdensome and unnecessary accounting for payment and healthcare operations disclosures

» The rule’s discouraging effect on physician adoption of EMRs

Pairing high-tech, healthcare

The University of California–San Francisco is collaborating with the University of California, Berkeley to offer a two-year master’s degree in “translational medicine,” the discipline of transferring lab breakthroughs to the marketplace.

According to The Wall Street Journal, the MBA-style program will target students from both medical and high-tech fields. The program will begin this fall.

’Private practices’ will be unmasked on large breaches website

Names of healthcare entities masked as “private practice” on the government website that lists organizations reporting large breaches of unsecured protected health information will soon be revealed.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the enforcer of the HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules, tells HealthLeaders

AHRQ releases software to build hospital quality website

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released its MONAHRQ (My Own Network Powered by AHRQ) software. Hospitals can use the software without charge to compile, analyze, and post data on the quality and cost of their healthcare, according to a HealthLeaders Media article.

The Windows-based software is designed to permit hospitals and other users to create customized websites with data that can be used for either internal quality improvement or public reporting of quality information. The average time to set up the software is about one to two days, says an AHRQ research scientist.

The use of the software is open to other entities as well, such as state governments, health insurers, health information technology vendors, and other providers. Before the introduction of MONAHRQ, costs to create a website with quality data from scratch have run as high as $300,000 and could take a year to set up, based on the experiences of some users.

Hospitals that download the software can customize it by entering hospital administrative data, including elements such as patient characteristics, diagnoses, procedures, health insurance type, and charges. MONAHRQ processes that information and creates a website that can be customized.
New on the net

Media in an e-mail it will lift the “private practice” tag on its website once the 40-day comment period is up on its April 13 Federal Register notice that modifies its existing “System of Records” practices.

After the comment period ends May 23, OCR anticipates beginning to publish the names of covered entities currently listed as “private practice” sometime after that. OCR intends to apply the new routine use retroactively, so names of all covered entities currently listed as “private practice” would be published.

Resisting the push to digitize

The federal government has boosted the electronic health record (EHR) industry with $19 billion for health information technology from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

According to a Politico article, it has also bolstered that support with provisions in the healthcare reform law.

But as a new and particularly stringent regulation nears, numerous medical groups say the aggressive government push to digitize is too much too soon.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act authorizes grants to hospitals and doctors serving Medicare and Medicaid patients that could demonstrate “meaningful use” of EHRs.

Both the AMA and the American Hospital Association, along with at least 50 other, smaller professional associations, have filed public comment protesting the definition. They see the definition as untenable and aggressive.

HHS seeks patient feedback about health IT

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is preparing two surveys that aim to gather information about patients’ preferences and satisfaction with electronic health records (EHR) and personal health records (PHR) in order to improve nationwide health information technology (IT) adoption efforts. According to a HealthLeaders Media article, both surveys were announced in the May 14 Federal Register.

HHS plans to survey about 500 Medicare beneficiaries who are enrolled in the Medicare PHR Choice Pilot, which launched in January 2009 in Arizona and Utah. The program encouraged fee-for-service beneficiaries to enroll in one of several available PHR services to track their own health and healthcare services.

HHS hasn’t yet indicated whether it plans to expand the pilot project, but the results of the survey could determine whether Medicare adopts a national PHR program.

The second survey will be designed to assess the gap between patients’ and providers’ perceptions about how EHR systems affect the delivery of care. It will focus particularly on primary care practices, and the goal is to understand how having an EHR in a primary care office affects consumers’ satisfaction with their care, their communication with their doctor, and the coordination of care.

Both survey proposals are open for comments and suggestions for 30 days.

New defibrillator avoids wires in heart

Researchers announced that they have developed a new type of implantable defibrillator that avoids the need to connect the device directly to the heart with wires called leads, which are

Microsoft in venture for health database in Canada

Microsoft is creating an online database in Canada with the Telus Corporation, a large wireless carrier. The Internet-based service will be available to Canadian consumers and their healthcare providers. The New York Times reports that it will be based on Microsoft’s HealthVault™ software. Telus did not disclose financial terms of the deal.
associated with complications of the traditional technique. According to The Wall Street Journal, the researchers said a study showed the new defibrillator successfully detected and corrected potentially life-threatening irregular heartbeats after a lead from the device was placed under the skin adjacent to the heart.

**Company plans to sell genetic testing kit at drugstores**

Beginning May 14, shoppers at more than 6,000 drugstores across the nation will be able to pick up a test to scan their genes for a propensity for Alzheimer’s disease, breast cancer, diabetes, and other ailments.

The move is being welcomed by those who hope that deciphering the genetic code will launch a new era in biomedical science, reports The Washington Post. But it’s being feared by those who worry it will open a Pandora’s box of confusion, privacy violations, genetic discrimination, and other issues.

**Hospital uses cell phone texting to announce ER waiting time**

To make the emergency room (ER) more patient-friendly, Reston (VA) Hospital Center has devised a text messaging service that tells you how long the wait will probably be. According to a Washington Post article, people can text “ER” to 23000 and receive a reply with the most up-to-date wait time.

**Wireless health institute gets $20 million**

A pair of San Diego philanthropists gave $20 million to the West Wireless Health Institute to jump-start product development at the La Jolla, CA, facility, which could emerge as a leading player in the international movement to improve medical care with cell phones and other devices.

The latest donation from Gary and Mary West will help the institute recruit more engineers, reports The San Diego Union-Tribune. Those workers will create equipment that relies on wireless networks to track patients’ health conditions, remind them about medications, or alert their doctors when a problem surfaces.
HEALTHCARE GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

Focus: Obstetrics resources

According to the American Pregnancy Association (our site of the month), 11,018 women give birth in America every day. There are also nearly 4,780 women who experience pregnancy loss and 5,479 couples who struggle with infertility issues. The Internet has a number of excellent obstetrics websites to supply these patients with resources and information.

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) site (www.acog.org) is a great source for reliable information. The membership organization’s site contains educational offerings, news articles, and information on women’s issues such as adolescent healthcare, HIV, and violence.

The Parents section of KidsHealth.org is another superior obstetrics site. It contains online tools, answers to FAQs, and articles on a wide range of conditions.

Lastly, the Pregnancy.org website provides information on topics such as preconception and preparing for parenthood.

The site’s online tool lineup is also impressive, containing tools such as a basal body temperature chart, due date calculator, quizzes, lists, and guides. Users can also receive free text messages timed to the due date or birth of a baby.

Several obstetrics resources are described and reviewed in the following pages, as listed in the index below, using the five-star system to rate each on content, interface, and style.

### Index: Obstetrics resources

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American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
www.acog.org

The ACOG represents more than 52,000 members who provide healthcare for women. It is a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization. The ACOG advocates for quality healthcare for women, maintains high standards of clinical practice and continuing education, promotes patient education, and increases awareness of issues in women’s healthcare.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation links. Some of the links expand to display additional menus. You’ll also find a set of quick links to frequently accessed content. You’ll find these on the left-hand side of the site’s home page. You can also click on links on the site’s home page to access featured content, such as news releases and announcements.

Key features of this site include:

- Advocacy information, such as ACOG legislative priorities
A Health Reform Center that contains information on how health reform will affect physicians and patients, including a Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentation, answers to FAQs, and material about the ACOG’s work on reform.

Educational offerings

News articles and releases

Advice on building a practice

Historical information about obstetrics and gynecology

A career center

An online discussion forum

Access to ACOG publications, such as bulletins, clinical reviews, and committee opinions

Research information, including surveys, citations, and abstracts

Links to additional resources

Meeting information

An events calendar

Practice management information on topics such as coding, health information technology, and HIPAA

Guidelines and policy statements

Unique elements: The Women’s Issues section contains information on topics such as adolescent healthcare, HIV, and violence.

Comments: The site contains information in Spanish and English.

Cost: The majority of content on the site is free, with certain areas restricted to registered members only.

RSS XML link: Visit www.acog.org/rss/acogrss.cfm for a complete list of feeds.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, ACOG.

Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses

www.awtonn.org

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

The Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) is a nonprofit membership organization that promotes the health of women and newborns. The group’s mission is to improve and promote the health of women and newborns and to strengthen the nursing profession through advocacy, research, education, and resources.

You can navigate this site using the link in the upper left-hand side of the home page. You can also click on links on the site’s home page to access featured content, such as event information.

Key features of this site include:

- Journals
- Publications
- Research, including priorities, grants, and research-based projects to advance evidence-based clinical practices
- Links to additional resources
- Perinatal risk assessment information
- Perinatal staffing surveys
- Evidence-based practice workshop information
- Webinars on topics such as “The Professional’s Role in Perinatal Bereavement” and “The Truths About Cervical Cancer”
- Legislative news and views
- Information about the association’s coalitions
- Position statements
- Internship and fellowship information
- Event information
- News articles
- Information about AWHONN public health campaigns

Unique elements: The association has a presence on Facebook and YouTube. You can click on these links from the right-hand side of the page.

Comments: The site contains an online store.

Cost: The majority of content on the site is free, with certain areas restricted to members only.

RSS XML link: None.
Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses, AWHONN.

**KidsHealth.org**

**www.kidshealth.org**

**Ratings:** Content: ★★★★☆ Interface: ★★★★☆ Style: ★★★★☆

KidsHealth is a website about children’s health and development. It is part of The Nemours Foundation’s Center for Children’s Health Media. The site contains health facts as well as information on a wide range of physical, emotional, and behavioral issues affecting kids and teens.

Click on the Parents link to enter the site. This is where the majority of the obstetrics-related information resides. From there, you can navigate using the left-hand navigation links. Clicking on a topic will display additional subtopics. You can also click on links within the parent section to access featured content, such as information on positive parenting, a body mass index calculator, and summer safety advice. To access the obstetrics information on the site, click Pregnancy & Newborns.

Key features of this site include:

- Answers to FAQs
- Recipes
- First aid and safety information
- Information about doctors and hospitals
- Articles on a wide range of conditions
- News articles
- Basic information about caring for a newborn
- A guide for first-time parents
- Information about genetics
- Information about cord blood banking
- Birth plans
- Information about birthing centers and hospital maternity wards
- Information about birthing classes
- A guide to eating during pregnancy
- Exercise advice for pregnant women
- Birth stories
- Breast-feeding information

Unique elements: The Pregnancy & Newborns section contains many online tools, such as a pregnancy calendar, recipes, and an immunization chart.

Comments: The site contains information in Spanish.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, The Nemours Foundation, KidsHealth.org.

**March of Dimes**

**www.marchofdimes.com**

**Ratings:** Content: ★★★★☆ Interface: ★★★★☆ Style: ★★★★☆

The March of Dimes® is a nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. The group’s mission is “to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.” The organization carries out this mission through research, community services, education, and advocacy.

You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation links. You can also click on links on the site’s home page to access featured content, such as news articles, the site’s blog, and online tools.

Key features of this site include:

- Information for healthcare professionals and researchers
- Event information
Fact sheets on a wide range of perinatal and genetic topics
Continuing education for healthcare professionals
Access to Peristats®, an interactive perinatal data resource
An online product catalog
Ask the Expert features
Videos (subscribe via iTunes®)
Audio files (subscribe via iTunes)
Pregnancy articles
Information on how to support the March of Dimes
Pregnancy-related information
Advice on caring for your baby
Information about birth defects
Information about premature birth
Links to social networking tools, such as Facebook, Twitter™, YouTube, and Flickr®
A tool that lets you locate your local March of Dimes chapter

Unique elements: The site contains an interactive Flash program that lets parents learn how newborns signal what they feel and what they need. The program includes information about sleeping, crying, and feeding.

Comments: Users can opt to sign up for the site’s newsletter. It contains articles for parents, news, personal stories, and much more. Click on the subscribe link on the home page to learn more.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, birth defects, March of Dimes.

OBGYN.net
www.obgyn.net

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: **** Style: ****

OBGYN.net is an online community of OB/GYN medical professionals, pharmaceutical and medical device companies, and their patients. The group’s mission is “to share knowledge to advance women’s healthcare globally.”

You can navigate this site using the following links that will present content to best fit your individual needs: Medical Professionals, Medical Industry, and For Women. You can also click on quick links on the site’s home page to access frequently requested content, such as discussion forums, infertility, and weight management.

Key features of this site include:
» An Ask the Expert feature
» Conference presentations
» Information on OB/GYN health topics, such as adhesions, breast health, contraception, and menopause
» A calendar of events
» Continuing medical education and training webinars
» Information about a first trip to a gynecologist
» Information about the future of reproductive medicine
» Information about medical societies and associations
» An acronym decoder for some of the frequently used acronyms in the field
» A jobs database
» Vendor information
» Webcasts
» Educational tutorials
» Videos
» Advice for younger women
» News articles

Unique elements: The site contains online discussion forums that cover a variety of topics, such as women’s health, endometriosis, fibroids, pregnancy and birth, and many others.

Comments: Healthcare professionals are encouraged to submit content for inclusion on the site.

Cost: The majority of content on the site is free, with certain areas restricted to registered members only; however, registration is free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, OBGYN.net.
Obstetric Ultrasound
www.ob-ultrasound.net

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: *** Style: **

The Obstetric Ultrasound website is a comprehensive collection of information regarding obstetric ultrasound. Dr. Joseph S.K. Woo of Hong Kong maintains the site.

You can navigate this site using the links within the text on the home page. You’ll need to scroll down to find the content that interests you. If you scroll to the bottom of the page, you’ll find a collection of links to specific content on the site.

Key features of this site include:
» Information about obstetric ultrasound scans, including its history
» How obstetric ultrasound is used in pregnancy
» How physicians use obstetric ultrasound to determine gestational age and assess fetal size
» How physicians use obstetric ultrasound to diagnose fetal malformation
» Information about how practitioners use ultrasound to determine placental localization
» How ultrasound is used to gather information regarding multiple pregnancies
» Information about the different types of scans, such as transvaginal and Doppler ultrasound
» Information about the safety of obstetric ultrasounds
» Links to additional resources

Unique elements: The site contains a gallery of ultrasound images depicting various obstetric conditions.

Comments: The site contains a helpful FAQs page.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, Dr. Joseph S.K. Woo, Obstetric Ultrasound.

Pregnancy.com
www.pregnancy.com

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: **** Style: *****

Pregnancy.com is owned and operated by BabyCenter, a global interactive parenting network that launched in 1997. The site contains information on popular pregnancy topics of interest to expecting parents.

You can navigate this site using the left-hand navigation links. You can also click on links on the site’s home page to access featured content, such as health tools, articles, and product information.

Key features of this site include:
» Advice on selecting a baby name
» Labor and delivery information
» A list of pregnancy signs and symptoms
» Fertility information
» Due date calculators
» Ovulation calculators
» An online store containing products related to maternity, nursery, car seats, infant clothing, and many other categories
» A week-by-week tool that lets users learn more about their child’s development
» A downloadable pregnancy planner

Unique elements: The site contains an online community of groups. You can peruse them by topic by clicking on the BabyCenter talk section’s Find Your Birth Club link. Community topics include adoption, birth clubs, getting pregnant, fertility issues and concerns, and pregnancy.

Comments: The site contains information in Spanish and English.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, BabyCenter, pregnancy.com.

Pregnancy.org
www.pregnancy.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: **** Style: *****

Pregnancy.org is a newcomer to the field of obstetrics websites. The site is described as “built by parents for parents.”

You can navigate this site using top-level navigation links. You can also click on links on the site’s home page to access
featured content on topics such as getting pregnant, pregnancy, labor and delivery, and baby and beyond.

Key features of this site include:
» Information on getting pregnant
» Preconception checklist, including tests that may be required before getting pregnant
» Pregnancy tools, such as a baby name database and pregnancy calendar
» Information on labor and delivery
» Advice for new mothers and fathers to help them get ready for parenthood, including tips on choosing a pediatrician and what baby stuff you need
» Advice for after the baby arrives on topics such as siblings, juggling work and family, kids’ activities, and self-esteem
» Ask the Expert section featuring advice from a child psychologist, doula, and lactation consultant, among others
» Links to news articles on a variety of pregnancy and parenting topics
» Social networking tools and blogs
» Videos on topics including “Taking the newborn outside” and “Introducing the concept of money to your child”
» Reviews of products and services from books to strollers to fertility monitors

Unique elements: The site contains many social networking tools, including links to common social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. You can also click the Join the Community link on the left-hand side of the site to use the Ask the Community feature, the live chat feature, or post comments on the bulletin board.

Comments: The site contains an online store.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: Visit www.pregnancy.org/taxonomy/term/1/all/feed for a complete list of feeds.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, Pregnancy.org.

Pregnancy-Info.net
www.pregnancy-info.net

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

Pregnancy-Info.net is maintained by parents to offer information to users who are pregnant or who are planning a future pregnancy.

You can navigate this site using the top-level or left-hand navigation links. Some of the links expand to reveal additional menu options. You can also click on links on the site’s home page to access featured content, such as articles, newsletter information, and forums.

Key features of this site include:
» Advice on becoming pregnant, including pregnancy symptoms, conception, preconception care, and adoption
» Pregnancy health information, such as diet and exercise
» Information regarding pregnancy, including medical tests, prenatal care, stages of pregnancy, teen pregnancy, and discomfort
» Information regarding labor and birth, including topics such as birth plans and cesarean section
» Postpartum content, including breast-feeding, depression, body changes
» Information regarding the problems that may occur during pregnancy, including risk factors, complications, STDs, and cancer
» Advice for those coping with pregnancy loss
» Baby naming advice

Unique elements: The site contains many videos on topics such as the use of chiropractic care during pregnancy, working during pregnancy, exercise, and reducing stress. You’ll find them listed at the bottom of individual topic pages.

Comments: Users can sign up to receive a free newsletter from the site. From the left-hand side of the page, check the newsletter(s) you are most interested in, then enter your e-mail address.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, Pregnancy-Info.net.

What to Expect
www.whattoexpect.com

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

What to Expect is a website from the author of the book What to Expect When You’re Expecting, which has been the go-to book for expecting moms for many years now. The website is part of the Everyday Health Pregnancy and Parenting Network.
You can navigate this site using the top-level navigation links, which allow you to select information about preconception and pregnancy as well as information about child rearing. You can also click on links on the site’s home page to access health guides, online tools, and articles. Click on Preconception or Pregnancy to access the obstetrics-related information on the site.

Key features of this site include:

» Information about pregnancy symptoms, such as backache, bloody show, and appetite
» A free, customized newsletter (enter your due date or baby's birth date and e-mail address in the field on the home page)
» Blogs
» An Ask the Expert feature
» News articles
» Online polls
» A presence on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter

Unique elements: The site contains a message board that includes groups on many topics, such as birthing options, breast-feeding, complications, blended families, and multiples and twins.

Comments: The site has many helpful online tools, including a due date calculator, an ovulation calculator, and a pregnancy calendar.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, What to Expect.

WomensHealth.gov

www.womenshealth.gov

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: **** Style: ****

The National Women’s Health Information Center (NWHIC) is a service of the Office on Women’s Health (OWH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The OWH was established in 1991 to “provide leadership to promote healthy equity for women and girls through sex/gender-specific approaches.” The NWHIC offers free women’s health information on more than 800 topics through its call center and this website.

You can navigate this site using the left-hand navigation links. Some of the links expand to display additional menus. You can also click on links on the site’s home page to access featured content, such as health tools, statistics, and news. To access the obstetric information on the site, click Health Topics and then click Pregnancy. This displays the healthy pregnancy page on the site.

Key features of this site include:

» Preconception advice, including tips to help you conceive and what to do if you have problems
» Statistics
» Campaign information
» Information for healthcare professionals
» Social networking tools
» Information about prenatal care, food, fitness, and how to deal with discomfort and problems that may arise
» Advice to help new mothers get ready for parenthood, including tips on choosing a pediatrician, purchasing a car seat, and how to baby-proof your home
» How to spot the signs of labor
» Information about the screenings and tests that newborns receive after birth
» Links to additional resources
» Pregnancy-related news articles
» A guide to pregnancy rights
» Tips for recovering from the birthing process

Unique elements: The site contains many health tools, such as a basal body temperature chart, due date calculator, quizzes, lists, and guides. Click on Mom-to-Be Tools to access them. Users can also sign up to receive free text messages timed to the due date or birth of a baby.

Comments: The site contains information in Spanish and English.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: obstetrics, obstetricians, women, women’s healthcare, pregnancy, conception, What to Expect.
HEALTHCARE GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

Focus: Telemedicine resources

According to the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) site (www.americantelemed.org), telemedicine is “the use of medical information exchanged from one site to another via electronic communications to improve patients’ health status.”

A few years ago, Medicine on the ‘Net would have been hard-pressed to locate telemedicine resources on the Web; however, the field has become quite significant given its many recent applications in specialty areas such as obstetrics, neurology, and mental health.

The telemedicine websites we’ve selected are created by organizations, regional groups, legal experts, the government, and the military. You’ll find that they contain information about telemedicine as well as their specific usage of it.

The Telemedicine Information Exchange site (www.tie.telemed.org) contains information for healthcare providers who have an interest in telemedicine. Sample content includes articles, a glossary of terms, issue overviews, and training information.

The California Telemedicine and eHealth Center (CTEC) site (www.cteconline.org) is also a great source of information. For example, the telehealth resource center contains a guide to help users through defining, planning, and implementing a telemedicine program.

The International Society for Telemedicine and eHealth site (www.isft.net) contains information about the important role that telemedicine plays in helping patients worldwide. The site contains podcasts, best practice models, and presentations.

Several telemedicine resources are described and reviewed in the following pages, as listed in the index below, using the five-star system to rate each on content, interface, and style.

American Telemedicine Association
www.americantelemed.org
Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: ****

The ATA works to promote access to medical care for consumers and healthcare professionals through the use of telecommunications technology. The ATA was established in 1993 as a nonprofit organization. It is open to individuals, healthcare institutions, companies, and other organizations with an interest in deploying telemedicine.

You can navigate this website using the top-level navigation structure. The links expand to reveal additional drop-down menu options. You can also access featured content on the site’s home page, such as event information, news articles, and links to social networking tools. The home page...
also contains a list of quick links along the left-hand side of the page. Clicking on these links will display frequently accessed content.

Key features of this site include:
- Information about the association
- A description of telemedicine
- A telemedicine overview
- Telemedicine network maps
- Terminology
- Guidelines and technical standards that affect the practice of telemedicine
- Information about medical reimbursement
- News articles
- Membership information
- Public policy information, including white papers, answers to FAQs, and state policy
- Meeting information
- Education opportunities
- A product and service directory

Unique elements: The site contains a video library containing clips on telemedicine-related topics. You’ll find it under the About Telemedicine heading in the top-level navigation.

Comments: The site has a social networking presence. You’ll find links on the home page to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and others.

Cost: The majority of the information on the site is free, with certain areas restricted to members only.

RSS XML link: You must be a member to take advantage of this feature.

Keywords: telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, American Telemedicine Association, ATA.

California Telemedicine and eHealth Center
www.cteconline.org

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: ***** Style: *****

CTEC is a source of information on the development and operation of telemedicine and telehealth programs. It is nationally recognized as one of six federally designated Telehealth Resource Centers in the United States. The center’s mission is “to provide leadership and direction in the development and application of innovative telemedicine and telehealth systems to improve the delivery and availability of health programs.”

You can navigate this website using the navigation links on the left-hand side of the page. You can also access featured content on the site’s home page, such as surveys, videos, and news articles.

Key features of this site include:
- Information about the center
- A description of the difference between telemedicine and telehealth
- Examples of telehealth applications
- The importance of telehealth applications
- The importance of telemedicine and telehealth services in the healthcare system
- Information about telemedicine in the state of California, including legislation
- Information about the CTEC telehealth optimization initiative, including reports, an overview, a summary of recommendations, and action steps
- Success stories that discuss how telemedicine has changed the lives of patients
- Online training videos to help lead users through the important elements of telemedicine
- Forms
- Tools
- Links to additional resources

Unique elements: The site contains a guide to help users through defining, planning, and implementing a telemedicine program. Click on the CTEC Program Developer & Guides link in the right-hand column of the home page.

Comments: The site contains a blog. Click on the CTEC Blog link in the left-hand column to access it.
A list of licensure requirements by state for nurses, doctors, and other health professionals

FDA regulations

Legal and regulatory issues surrounding telecommunications

Reimbursement information—how Medicare, Medicaid, and private payers treat telemedicine claims

Credentialing and accreditation information, including a glossary of credentialing terms, a credentialing timeline, Conditions of Participation, and legal precedents

Information about telepharmacy

HIPAA privacy and confidentiality information

Unique elements: The site contains information on how telemedicine is treated by individual state laws.

Comments: The site contains answers to FAQs regarding telehealth.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, Center for Telehealth and E-Health Law.

Health Resources and Services Administration
www.hrsa.gov/telehealth

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: ****

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). It is the primary federal agency for improving access to healthcare services for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. The administration’s mission is “to improve and achieve health equity through access to quality services, a skilled health workforce, and innovative programs.”

Key features of this site include:

» A directory of telehealth resources

» A description of telehealth

» Information about the center

» News articles

» Licensure information for those who want to practice telehealth

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You can navigate this website using the top-level navigation structures. Some links expand to display additional menu options. You can also access featured content on the site’s home page, such as online tools, news articles, and grant information.

Key features of this site include:
» Information about telehealth
» A description of how HRSA is involved in telehealth
» Telehealth grant and funding information
» Reports to Congress and legislative updates
» Information about the joint working group on telehealth

Unique elements: The site contains forums where members can engage in discussions concerning online mental health. The forums encompass a wide range of topics.


Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: http://ask.hrsa.gov/HIL.xml

Keywords: telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HHS, Health Resources and Services Administration, HRSA.

International Society for Mental Health Online
www.ismho.org

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ***

The International Society for Mental Health Online (ISMHO) is an international community of students, teachers, researchers, clinical practitioners, and others interested in using Internet technologies to sustain positive mental health. The members meet online to discuss issues and collaborate on projects that further their mission, which is “to promote the understanding, use, and development of online communication, information, and technology for the international mental health community.”

You can navigate this website using the top-level navigation structure. The links expand to reveal additional drop-down menu options. You can also access featured content on the site’s home page, such as news articles, information about the society, and forums.

Key features of this site include:
» Information about the society
» Membership benefits and how to join
» Suggested principles for the online provision of mental health services
» Clinical case studies
» Reports
» How to assess a person’s suitability for online therapy
» The myths and realities of online clinical work
» A bibliography
» White papers on topics such as “Potential Risks and Benefits of Online Psychotherapeutic Interventions”
» Links to additional resources
» News articles
» Event information

Unique elements: The site contains forums where members can engage in discussions concerning online mental health. The forums encompass a wide range of topics.


Cost: The majority of the information on the site is free, with certain areas restricted to members only.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, mental health, International Society for Mental Health Online, ISMHO.

International Society for Telemedicine and eHealth
www.isft.net

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ***

Founded in 1997, the International Society for Telemedicine and eHealth (ISfTeH) helps disseminate information about telemedicine and e-health in order to provide access to experts throughout the world. The site describes the organization as an umbrella for national telemedicine and e-health organizations, which they also help establish.
You can navigate this website using the left-hand navigation structure. The links expand to reveal additional menu options. You can access featured content on the site’s home page as well, such as event information and brochures.

Key features of this site include:

- Information about the society
- Conference and event information
- Membership and member information
- Information about the society’s working groups: e-health information technology, education, students, telemessaging, and others
- Best practice models
- Publications
- Presentations
- Reports
- A telemedicine directory
- An online forum (registration required)
- Links to additional resources, such as search engines, publications, and other organizations
- Survey results

Unique elements: The site recently added podcasts to its online offerings. To access them, go to the home page, scroll down, then select the link within the podcasts section.

Comments: Users can access the site’s online newsletter. You can find the newsletter under the Working Groups link.

Cost: Free.
RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, International Society for Telemedicine and eHealth, ISFTeH.

Telehealth.net
www.telehealth.net

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

Telehealth.net describes itself as “your trusted information and networking source for ehealth, telehealth, home health, and telemedicine.” Much of the information on the site pertains to the delivery of mental healthcare using telemedicine.

You can navigate this website using the top-level navigation structures. You can also access featured content on the site’s home page, such as event information, articles, and recent comment posts.

Key features of this site include:

- Articles on topics such as confidentiality, delivering behavioral telehealth, distance technology, and emerging opportunities
- A blog
- A suggested reading list
- A glossary of terms
- Interviews with experts in the field

Unique elements: The site contains a free e-mail discussion community for healthcare professionals on topics such as health, distance learning, and telehealth news. Click on the discussion link to access this content.

Comments: The site contains links to additional resources worldwide.

Cost: Free.
RSS XML link: None.
Keywords: telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, Telehealth.net.
The Telemedicine & Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC) performs medical reconnaissance and special operations to address gaps in Department of Defense medical research programs. We have included this site since many innovations in the field of telemedicine begin with solutions created to address medical problems on battlefields.

You can navigate this website using the top-level navigation structures. Some of the links expand to reveal additional menu options. You can also access featured content on the site’s home page, such as announcements and event information.

Key features of this site include:

- Descriptions of featured projects, including the Electronic Information Carrier and Transcranial Doppler
- Information about funding opportunities
- Online tools for investigators
- Telemedicine and advanced technology news articles related to TATRC programs and partners
- A calendar of events
- An archive of past meeting information
- Information about the organization

Unique elements: The Portfolios section contains information about the organization’s work in a variety of areas, including psychiatric health, international health, trauma, vision, and infectious disease.

Comments: The site contains links to additional military, government, and telemedicine resources.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, Telemedicine & Advanced Technology Research Center, TATRC.

Telemedicine Information Exchange
www.tie.telemed.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: **** Style: ****

The Telemedicine Information Exchange (TIE) describes itself as “an unbiased and all-inclusive platform for information on telemedicine and telehealth.” The site, which is supported and maintained by the Association of Telehealth Service Providers, is aimed at healthcare professionals and others who are directly or indirectly involved in healthcare delivery services and have an interest in the practice of telemedicine.

You can navigate this website using the top-level or right-hand navigation structures. Some of the links expand to reveal additional menu options. You can also access featured content on the site’s home page, such as news articles, publications, and event information.

If you are a healthcare professional, you will want to click the Professional link on the right-hand side of the page. If you are a consumer, click the Consumer link. These links display specific content for each audience.

Key features of this site include:

- Access to telemedicine and telehealth articles
- News articles
- Access to the TIE Europe blog
- Information about telemedicine programs
long and contain information on the following telemedicine topics:

- First steps in creating a successful telehealth program
- Disease management
- Electronic medical records for rural health systems
- School-based services
- Telehealth technology
- Specialty-specific information
- A definition of terms

Unique elements: The site was supported by grants from the federal Office for the Advancement of Telehealth, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Comments: You will need to download Adobe® Reader® to view the files.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: None.

Keywords: telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, Telemedicine Technical Assistance Documents.

Telemedicine Technical Assistance Documents
www.telehealth.muhealth.org

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ***

This website contains technical assistance documents for individuals or organizations interested in beginning to use telemedicine. The documents provide an understanding of the steps necessary to develop a sustainable network. They also provide information on specialty-specific areas such as cardiology, dermatology, mental health, home care, trauma, and pharmacy.

You can also click on the links on the home page to download the documents, which are more than 400 pages long and contain information on the following telemedicine topics:

- First steps in creating a successful telehealth program
- Disease management
- Electronic medical records for rural health systems
- School-based services
- Telehealth technology
- Specialty-specific information
- A definition of terms

Unique elements: Site users are invited to contribute information using their online submission form. Topics include programs, vendors, meetings, bibliographic citations, and jobs.

Comments: Users can sign up to receive news headlines by e-mail. Click the Services link in the top-level navigation structure, then select E-mail News Headlines.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML link: http://tic.telemed.org/xmlData/TIEnews1.xml.

Keywords: telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, Telemedicine Information Exchange, TIE.
The American Pregnancy Association (APA) is a national health organization that promotes reproductive and pregnancy wellness through education, research, advocacy, and community awareness. A nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of Texas, it was founded in 1995 by a couple in the adoption process who recognized the need for access to information related to reproductive and pregnancy health.

You can navigate this free site using the top or left-hand navigation links. Some of the links expand to display additional menus. You can also click on links on the site’s home page to access particular sections and featured content, such as online tools, articles, and pregnancy news. The site also contains a list of quick links to popular content on the right-hand side of the page under the title “Most Popular Articles.”

The site’s video library is unique and impressive. You can access it by clicking Video Library on the left-hand side of the home page. Video topics include the pill, endometriosis, reducing stress during pregnancy, infertility, and miscarriages.

Key features of this site include:
» Information to help women attempting to get pregnant, including topics such as preconception health, conception after age 35, nutrition, pregnancy symptoms, genetic counseling, pregnancy testing, and understanding ovulation
» Information about infertility, including medications, emotions, infertility terms, alternative treatments, reproductive technologies, and donor insemination
» Advice for those planning to become pregnant, including birthing choices, preconception health, maternity leave, and birth plans
» Advice for those preparing for the birth of a child, including how to choose a pediatrician and information on breast-feeding, lactation consultants, circumcision, wills, and life insurance
» Content for women who are pregnant with multiples
» Labor and birth information, including how to choose a childbirth education class, birthing types, cesarean delivery, and complications
» Information about common pregnancy discomforts, such as back pain, headaches, skin changes, leg cramps, swelling, sciatic nerve pain, and morning sickness
» Information about fetal development during the three trimesters
» Content on birth defects and disorders, including tips for preventing birth defects
» Advice for those suffering from a pregnancy loss
» Complications associated with pregnancy, such as bleeding, cervical cerclage, ectopic pregnancy, and gestational diabetes
» Discussion forums (registration required)
» Blogs

The site contains many online tools, including an ovulation calculator, a pregnancy calculator, and tools to locate a healthcare provider. Users can also sign up to receive the association’s free journal and newsletter.