

## **PCC, Department on Aging Announce Statewide Expansion of Telehealth** *Up To 18 Health Offices To Be Assessed For Innovative Telehealth Carts*

**COLUMBIA, S.C.** – Palmetto Care Connections (PCC), a non-profit telehealth network serving rural and underserved communities across South Carolina, and the South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA) today celebrated the ceremonial signing of a Memorandum of Agreement expanding access to telehealth care for thousands of South Carolinians.

Led by Chief Executive Officer Kathy Schwarting, MHA, a full staff and a board of directors including health care leaders from across the state, PCC will conduct site assessments at up to 18 rural senior centers to determine each office's telehealth readiness and broadband capabilities. Each office will then receive a telehealth cart for area seniors to use for telehealth visits. The carts, provided by PCC for deployment, would be available for those who may otherwise not have adequate access to health care.

"The people of our state deserve access to the highest quality health care," said Schwarting. "Collaborating with Director Connie Munn and her impressive team at SCDOA we have done great work and made significant progress toward putting telehealth carts in offices across South Carolina. Once we have these telehealth carts in place, the underserved and vulnerable among us will be able to benefit from broad scope of health services, which they need and deserve. We thank members of the General Assembly and the entire team at Aging for working so well with us to make this next step a reality."

"With our growing older population in South Carolina, at the Department on Aging, our focus is to ensure that our older adults have a place to live, have quality of life, and can age with dignity and respect," Munn said. "We are grateful for the partnership with Palmetto Care Connections that will improve access to healthcare which is vital to the quality of life for our older adults. These telehealth carts will be able to provide a critical role in the wellness of older adults. This would not be possible without the support from Kathy Schwarting and her dedicated team, and the members of the General Assembly to help provide our aging population this invaluable resource to healthcare."

Once offices are identified as suitable for telehealth carts and PCC and SCDOA have placed carts at the locations, PCC will train staff members to assist their seniors in successfully completing a telehealth visit, and share online educational offerings to staff members at each location. Additionally, PCC will provide ongoing support for each telehealth cart and help promote the new telehealth service.

SCDOA's mission is to meet the present and future needs of seniors, and to enhance their quality of life in South Carolina. Through a network of regional Area Agencies on Aging and local organizations SCDOA develops and manages services that help seniors remain independent in their homes and communities.

Established in 2010, Palmetto Care Connections (PCC) is a non-profit organization that brings technology, broadband, and telehealth solutions to health care providers in rural and underserved areas in South Carolina. PCC hosts the Annual Telehealth Summit of South Carolina presenting state and national best practices and trends, as well as providing networking connections for health care, technology and broadband professionals.



The leader of the South Carolina broadband consortium, PCC assists health care providers in receiving broadband savings through the Federal Communication Commission's Healthcare Connect Fund program. Since 2013, PCC has helped providers save more than \$30 million in broadband costs.

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