

Network News



**EASTERN
MONTANA
TELEMEDICINE
NETWORK**



EMTN MEMBERS SHINE AT THE AMERICAN TELEMEDICINE ASSOCIATION'S FOURTEENTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN LAS VEGAS

EMTN DIRECTOR INDUCTED INTO THE ATA COLLEGE OF FELLOWS

Thelma McClosky Armstrong, Director of EMTN, was among the first class of individuals to be named to the American Telemedicine Association College of Fellows. Induction into the ATA College recognizes significant achievements in telemedicine, service to the general telemedicine community, and service to the ATA.

Thelma has been at the forefront of telemedicine on the national level since the beginning of the ATA in 1993. Membership in the ATA includes individuals and corporations representing every state in the union and over 40 countries.

Thelma served as the president of ATA in 2005-2006. She has been an active member of the Board of Directors. Two projects that were highlights for Thelma included working with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid to ensure reimbursement for telemedicine services and collaborating with the National Governors Association to facilitate the provision of medical care over telemedicine across state lines.

Thelma continues to share her expertise in the field of telemedicine both in the political arena to ensure that barriers to care are removed and mentoring new programs through the process of establishing quality telemedicine programs.



hospitalizations and improved quality of care.

Telemonitoring was accomplished through the use of an Interactive Voice Response system. The system provided real-time information from patients with heart failure and diabetes. Providers were able to respond to early changes in patients conditions and prevent untoward events. Billings Clinic saw a 44% reduction in heart failure patient hospitalizations. Medicare billings were also reduced by 2.4 million.

Demonstrations such as this may influence CMS policies regarding the value of remote monitoring.

WANTED: Technicians for Telemedicine

Mike Roscoe, telehealth technician, represented Eastern Montana Telemedicine network as a guest presenter at the ATA Annual Meeting. He was part of a panel composed of telemedicine leaders from University of Miami Telehealth, University of Virginia Office of Telemedicine, and Alaska Federal Healthcare Access Network. The board focused on the roles of telehealth employees and training, educating and certifying technical workers in the field.

Many current employees in telemedicine departments came to their positions at the infancy of their programs and grew their knowledge and experience as the networks developed. They were hired with backgrounds in related fields such as audiovisual technology, television engineering or information technology. On the job training developed the competency required. Their experience and knowledge is difficult to replace.

Mike came to EMTN with a Bachelors degree in mass communication and radio and TV production background. His experience with that medium has provided valuable insight into video composition, lighting and audio quality. Additional skills in network communication and devices, data management and organizational communication problem solving were honed on the job.

Mike states, "I enjoy working directly with my customers to integrate their meeting needs with this technology."

Some of the information for this newsletter was obtained from the ATA website and the ATA official journal—Telemedicine and e-Health Volume 15 2009

Remote Monitoring Improves Care and Outcomes

EMTN Medical Director, Dr. Douglas Carr served as a panelist at ATA presenting outcomes of a CMS Medicare Group Practice Demonstration project. Billings Clinic was one of ten physician group practices to implement daily telemonitoring with chronically ill patients. The project goals included anticipating patient needs, preventing complications of chronic diseases and avoidable