

NORTH COUNTRY TELEHEALTH PARTNERSHIP

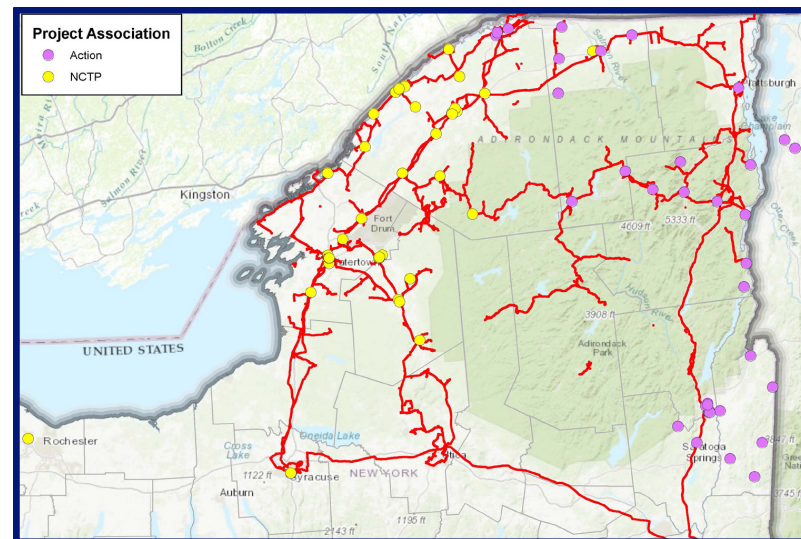
2023 Year in Review



Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO) began a collaboration with the Adirondack Health Institute (aHI) to form the **North Country Telehealth Partnership** (NCTP) in 2015 — a unified effort to plan and implement telemedicine throughout 11-counties covering northern New York. This collaborative has quickly become northern New York's leading agency focused on increasing access to healthcare through the innovative use of telehealth and telemedicine technology.

The Partnership works to increase access to healthcare via telehealth, through the following initiatives:

- Hosting the bi-monthly telehealth learning collaborative
- Fiber-optic network connecting healthcare facilities in the region
- Monitoring State and Federal telehealth policies
- Providing educational opportunities and technical assistance
- Promotion of telehealth, digital equity, and literacy
- Tracking telehealth utilization and addressing barriers to telehealth sustainability



Map of regional telemedicine fiber networks

Annual Report Highlights

- 2023 Telehealth Learning Collaboratives
- Highlights from the 2023 North Country Leadership Summit
- North Country Telehealth Data Snapshot
- Digital Equity and Telehealth Resources

2023 Learning Collaborative Recordings and Presentation Details

The Telehealth Learning Collaborative is a bi-monthly virtual meeting hosted by the North Country Telehealth Partnership. Meetings include regulatory updates, presentations, and discussions on current news and opportunities in the virtual care space.

January 23, 2023	<u>Distributing Hardware to Expand Telehealth - NRCIL's use of CARES Act Funding to Distribute Equipment to Expand Consumer Use of Telehealth Options</u> , presented by <i>Aileen Martin</i> , Northern Regional Center for Independent Living.
March 20, 2023	<u>Where We Started, Where We Are - An Overview of the North Country Telemedicine Fiber Networks</u> , presented by <i>Robert Hunt</i> , Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization.
May 15, 2023	<u>Reducing Barriers to Oral Healthcare - Asynchronous Teledentistry</u> , presented by <i>Dr. Nicholas Gardner</i> , Community Health Center of the North Country.
July 17, 2023	<u>Telepsychiatry and Rural Mental Health - A Partnership Between the American Psychiatric Association and the Central Appalachia Network of Mental Health Advocates</u> , presented by <i>Dr. Richard Lawrence Merkel</i> , University of Virginia.
September 18, 2023	<u>The Effects of Telemedicine Services on Patients Who Receive Behavioral Health Services in Rural St. Lawrence County</u> , presented by <i>Dr. Marela Fiacco</i> , SUNY Canton.
November 20, 2023	<u>Recognizing The Strengths and Limitations of Telehealth When Implementing Population Health Management</u> , presented by <i>Dr. Linda Collins</i> , Southeastern Louisiana University.

All past meetings are archived on the [AHI Youtube page linked here](#).

2024 Learning Collaborative Schedule (2:00PM -3:00PM EST)

[January 22, 2024](#)

[March 18, 2024](#)

[May 20, 2024](#)

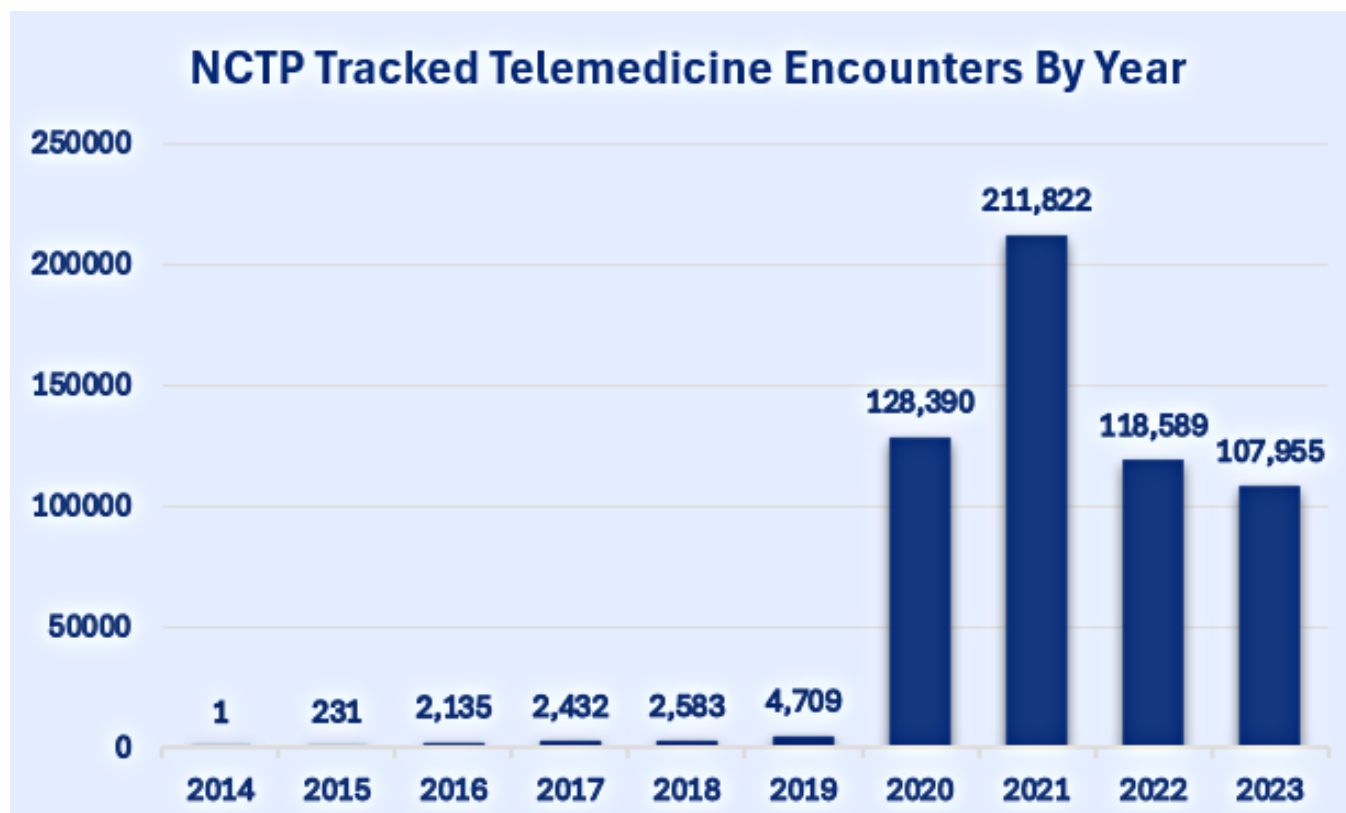
[July 15, 2024](#)

[September 16, 2024](#)

[November 18, 2024](#)

If you are interested in presenting at an upcoming telehealth learning collaborative, please click [here](#) to submit an interest form.

2023 North Country Telehealth Data Overview



Since 2020, telehealth encounters have increased dramatically as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Telehealth continues to serve as a valuable tool for the region, reducing wait times, increasing access to specialty services, and providing convenience for community members who may face barriers to care such as transportation.

The North Country Telehealth Partnership tracks quarterly telehealth encounter data voluntarily submitted by regional healthcare partners. While submissions vary quarterly, this information helps describe telehealth trends in the region.

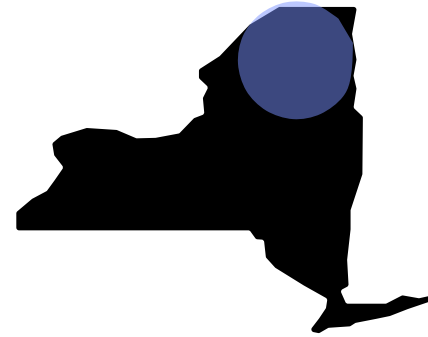
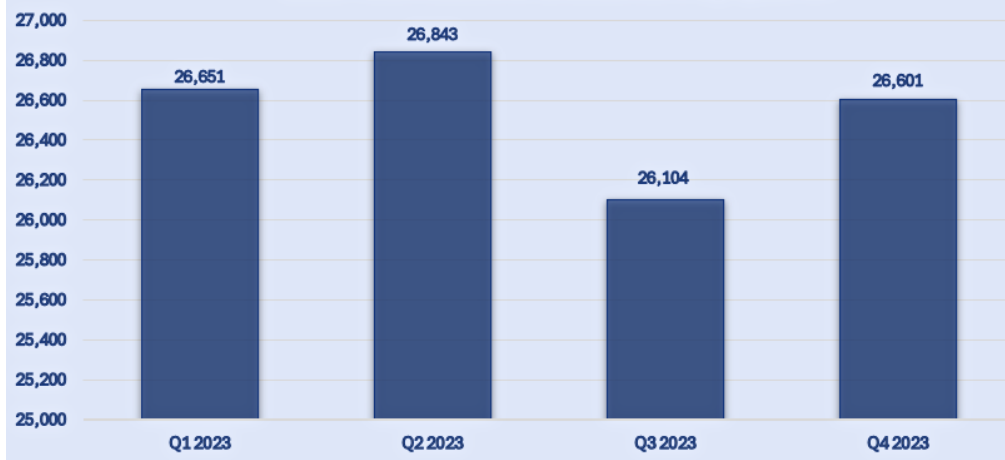
The Partnership Includes:

- Clinton County
- Essex County
- Franklin County
- Fulton County
- Hamilton County
- Jefferson County
- Lewis County
- Saratoga County
- St. Lawrence County
- Warren County
- Washington County

2023 Statistics

Additional 2023 Telehealth Data Trends in the Region

2023 Telemedicine Encounters By Quarter



**Approximately 68%
of telemedicine
encounters in 2023
were behavioral
health services.**

Snapshot of Common Telehealth Visit Types

Behavioral Health

- Psychiatry
- Counseling Services
- Substance Use Treatment
- MAT Services

Primary Care

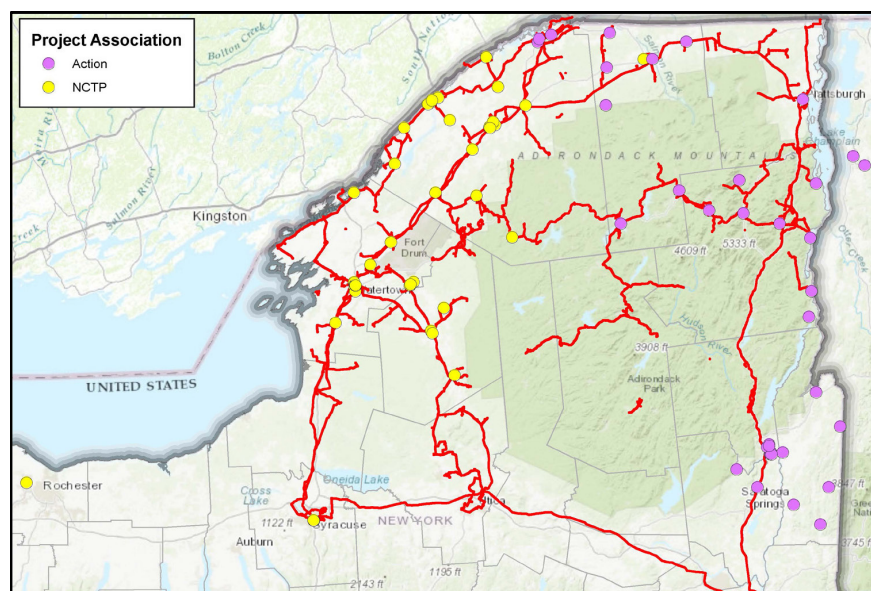
- Family Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Medication Management

Specialty Care

- Teledentistry
- Remote Patient Monitoring
- TeleStroke

Regional Telemedicine Fiber Networks

In 2009, FDRHPO created the North Country Telemedicine Project (NCTP), an extensive fiber-optic network that connected more than 25 healthcare facilities in Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Onondaga, and St. Lawrence counties, including Fort Drum's Guthrie Ambulatory Health Care Clinic. This network expanded in 2011, when FDRHPO partnered with the Adirondack-Champlain Telemedicine Information Network (ACTION) to create a second network encompassing sites in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Warren, and Washington counties, and Chittenden County in Vermont. Both networks now support over 75 healthcare facilities.



2023 North Country Leadership Summit

September 27-28, 2023

Lake George, NY

Over 180 attendees from more than 90 organizations participated in the two-day conference and heard from 40 speakers from across the North Country and beyond. A sample of sessions included: NYS Telehealth Regulation Updates, Strategies to Increase Access to Care in Rural Communities, and Telehealth for EMS Response.



Congratulations 2023 Telehealth Innovators

On September 28th at the North Country Leadership Summit, the 2023 Telehealth Innovator Award Ceremony was held.

The Telehealth Innovator Awards are presented to individuals in the region that have created an innovative program or application of telehealth, which has led to improved health outcomes in the community, and/or improved quality of life.

2023 Award Winners Include:



*Douglas Meyer, Mental Health Association of Essex County
Stacy Smith, Hudson Headwaters Health Network*



*Michele Catlin and Shannon VanHouse,
Claxton Hepburn Medical Center*

Digital Equity Efforts in the North Country

In 2022, the North Country Telehealth Partnership received a grant through the NY Digital Inclusion Fund, which supported the creation of the North Country Digital Inclusion Coalition. This group of regional stakeholders was formed to address digital equity challenges and barriers to telehealth access and in the North Country. More than 30 regional stakeholders including broadband experts, healthcare professionals, library staff, and more, have joined the Coalition. As a result of this convening, new opportunities to support the work of the [NYS ConnectALL Office](#) have emerged. In 2023, the Coalition was invited to lead stakeholder engagement opportunities to collect data on digital inclusion strengths and barriers to support the creation of a NYS Digital Equity Plan. Regional data collected by the North Country Telehealth Partnership and the North Country Digital Inclusion Coalition have helped inform regional snapshots which can be found [here](#).



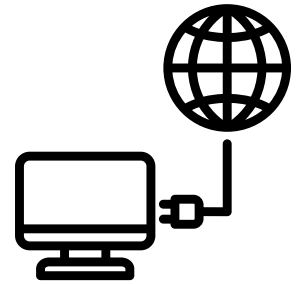
Digital Equity Resources:

[National Digital Inclusion Alliance](#)

[BroadbandUSA](#)

[Affordable Connectivity Program](#)

[New York State ConnectALL Office](#)



Links to Helpful Telehealth Policy Updates and Resources

New York State Policies

[Department Of Health](#)

[Office of Mental Health](#)

[Office Of Addiction Services and Supports](#)

[NYS Telehealth Summary from the Center for Connected Health Policy](#)

Federal Policies and Resources

[Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Medicare](#)

[HRSA Office of Telehealth Advancement](#)

[U.S Department of Health and Human Services Telehealth](#)

[U.S Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General](#)



Interested in getting involved? Reach out to the North Country Telehealth Partnership contacts:

Nancy DelMastro, Telehealth Project Manager, Adirondack Health Institute (ndelmastro@ahihealth.org)

Robert Hunt, Fiber Network Manager, Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (rhunt@fdrhpo.org)

To learn more about FDRHPO, visit <https://fdrhpo.org/> and subscribe to receive updates [here](#).

To learn more about aHI, visit <https://ahihealth.org/> and subscribe to receive updates [here](#).