

# Tackling Disparities in Access & Technology: **Promoting Access During Rapid Digital Evolution**

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June 6, 2025

**Helen Hughes, MD, MPH**

Medical Director, Office of Telemedicine | Johns Hopkins Medicine

Medical Director, Pediatric Telemedicine | Johns Hopkins Children's Center

Co-Chair Patient Family Centered Design (MyChart) Committee

Associate Professor of Pediatrics, General Pediatrics | The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

# Objectives

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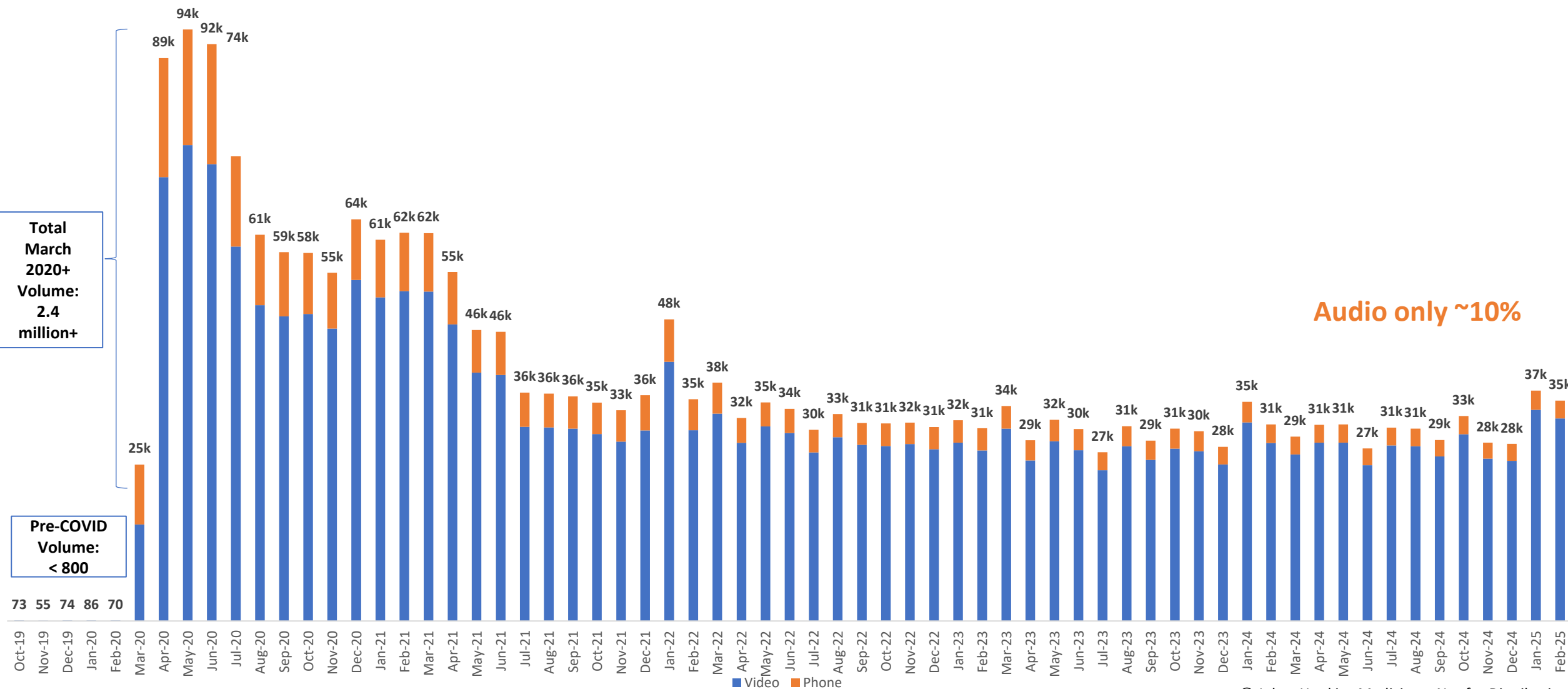
- 1) Describe the digital health transformation that occurred in the setting of the COVID pandemic
- 2) Discuss disparities in digital health access across populations in Baltimore
- 3) List potential intervention that support older adults with electronic portal use and telemedicine access

## The Office of Telemedicine



- Manages the coordination and strategic deployment of all Johns Hopkins Medicine programs that deliver clinical services using virtual modalities.
- Works closely with across stakeholders to ensure high quality care including:
  - Johns Hopkins Health IT/Epic and JH@IT
  - Billing
  - Compliance
  - Legal
  - Marketing & Communications
  - Governmental Affairs (State and Federal)
  - Data Analytics
  - IRB

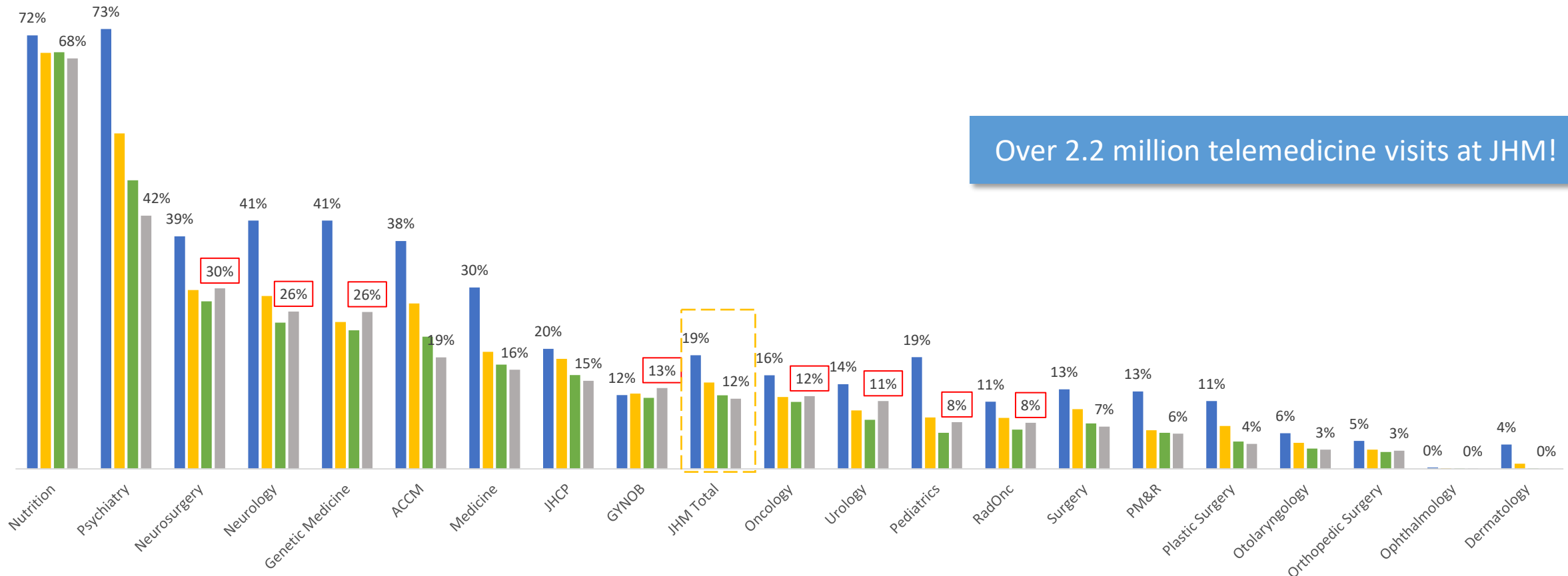
# Video and Audio-Only Volumes



# Telemedicine vs. In-Person Visits

## Ambulatory Volume

- Telemedicine visits are approximately 12% of “telemedicine sensitive” ambulatory care in CY24
- Care remains distributed across **multiple primary care** and **subspecialty verticals**
- High users include **advanced specialties** like **genetics, anesthesia/pre-operative medicine, neurology, and neurosurgery**



\*Note: Excludes “telemedicine insensitive” visits, such as lab, radiology.

■ CY2021 ■ CY2022 ■ CY2023 ■ CY2024

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# Benefits of Federal PHE for Telemedicine

## March 2020

### Medicare and Medicaid Video Visits

- ✓ Video visits permitted when Medicare or Medicaid beneficiary located in the home
- ✓ Flexibility on provider location

### Telephone Coverage

- ✓ Enhanced telephone payment rates

### Expanded Codes / Provider Types for Video Visits

- ✓ Expanded CPTs permitted by video (148 new codes, to the previous 103 codes)
- ✓ Expanded provider roles (i.e., therapists, counselors, SLP, etc)

### Video Platform HIPAA non- enforcement

- ✓ Increased flexibility for provider and patient to choose video platform that works for each situation

### Cross-state Healthcare

- ✓ States passed waiver to allow cross state healthcare via telemedicine

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- ✓ Increased flexibility for provider and patient to choose video platform that works for each situation

- HIPAA compliant platform required

### Cross-state Healthcare

- ✓ States passed waiver to allow cross state healthcare via telemedicine

- Providers generally need to be licensed where the patient is located

# Addressing Digital Health Equity

DOI: 10.1353/HPU.2021.0058 • Corpus ID: 235869993

## A Process for Developing a Telehealth Equity Dashboard at a Large Academic Health System Serving Diverse Populations

[Helen K. Hughes](#), [Brian W. Hasselfeld](#), [L. Cooper](#), [Rachel L. J. Thornton](#), [Y. Commodore-Mensah](#) [less](#) • Published 2021 • Medicine, Political Science • Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved

Johns Hopkins Medicine (JHM) rapidly implemented telehealth system-wide as part of its COVID-19 pandemic response. In a four-month period (January–May, 2020), video visits across the system increased more than 1,000-fold (from approximately 80 to 80,000 per month). For vulnerable populations, telehealth may reduce or exacerbate disparities in access to and quality of care. To enhance equity in telehealth access, we must assess, in the moment, how system-wide digital health strategies affect... [Expand](#)

© Meharry Medical College Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved 32 (2021): 198–210.

> [Telemed J E Health](#). 2023 Jun 30. doi: 10.1089/tmj.2023.0050. Online ahead of print.

## Individual- and Neighborhood-Level Disparities in Audio-Only Telemedicine Utilization Across a Large Academic Health System

[Lilija Sadauskas](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Yvonne Commodore-Mensah](#)<sup>2 3</sup>, [Colin Wu](#)<sup>3</sup>, [Casey Overby Taylor](#)<sup>4 5</sup>, [Jeremy A Epstein](#)<sup>4</sup>, [Brian K Stackhouse](#)<sup>6</sup>, [Brian W Hasselfeld](#)<sup>1 4 6</sup>, [Helen K Hughes](#)<sup>1 6</sup>

Affiliations [+ expand](#)

PMID: 37389845 DOI: 10.1089/tmj.2023.0050

### Johns Hopkins Telehealth Equity Working Group *Established 2020*



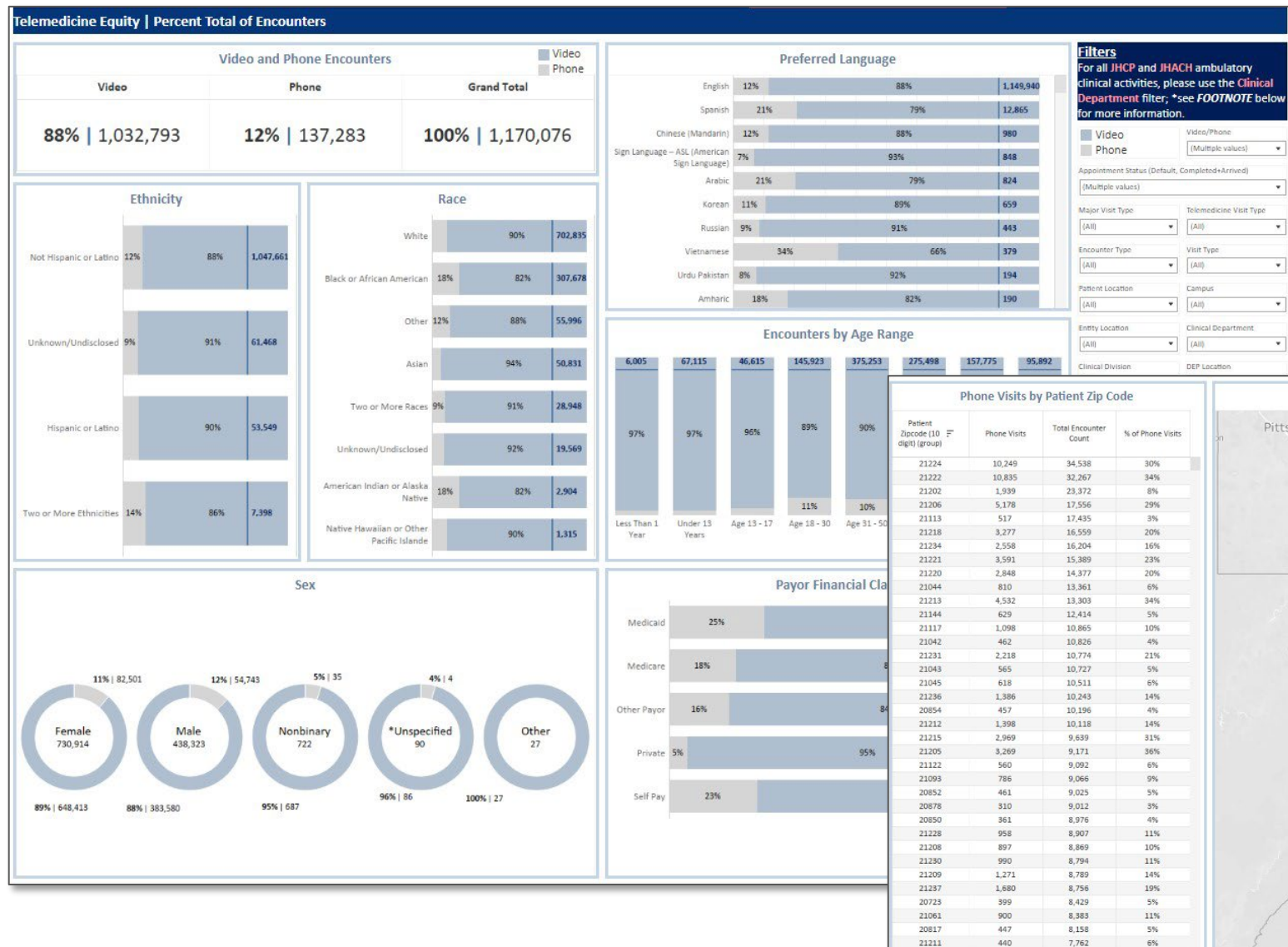
**telemedicine**

JOHNS HOPKINS  
UNIVERSITY & MEDICINE

Office of Economic Development  
and Community Partnerships

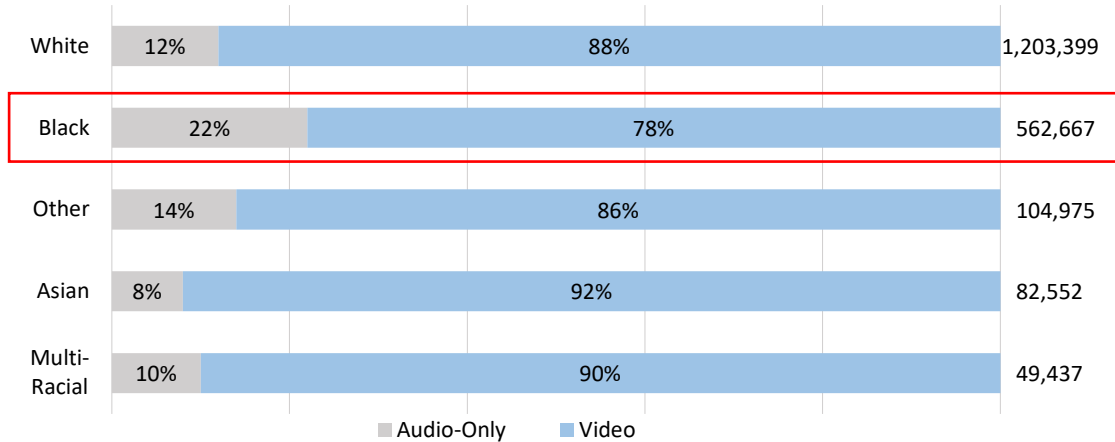


# Telehealth Equity: Dashboard

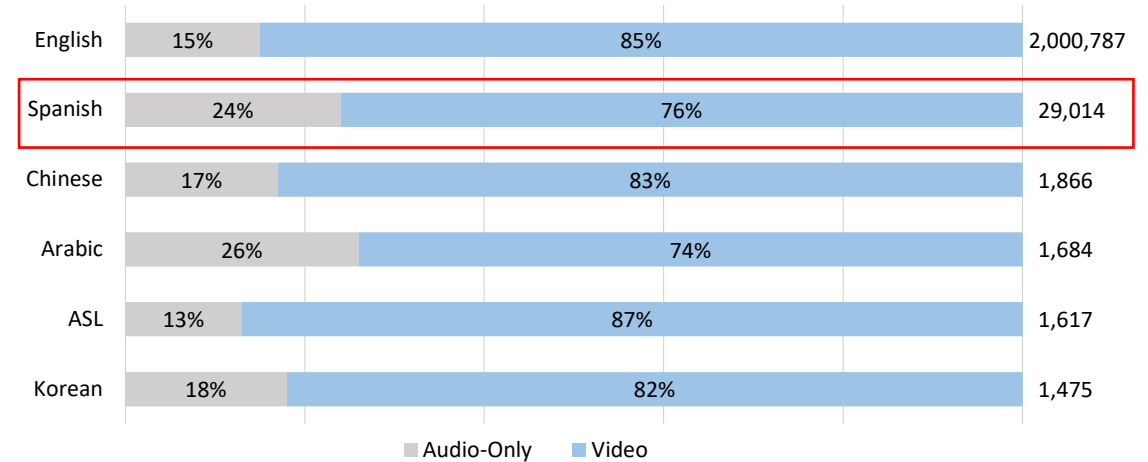


# Video vs. Phone: Inequities

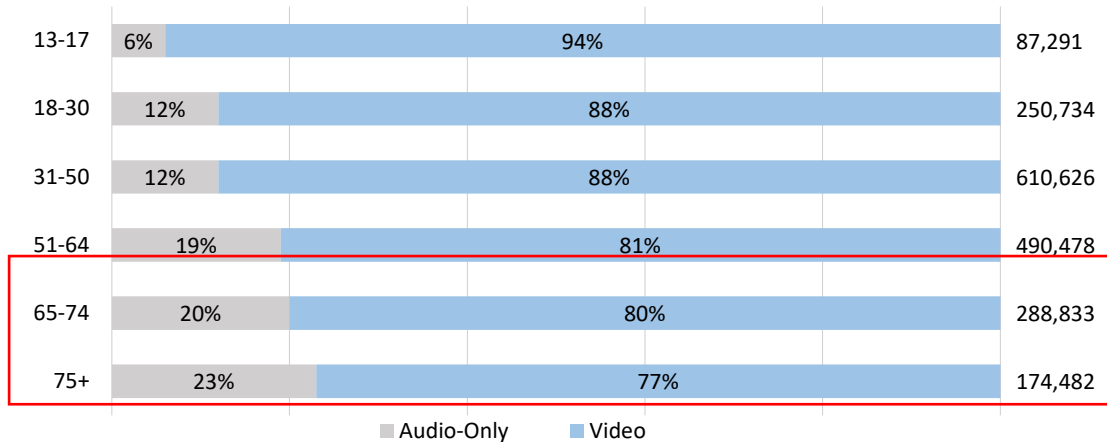
## 1. Race



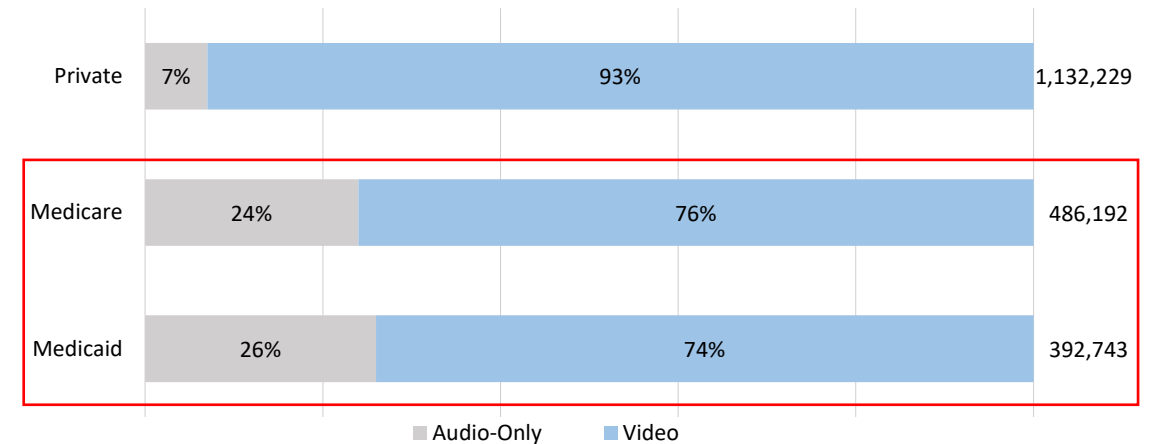
## 2. Preferred Language



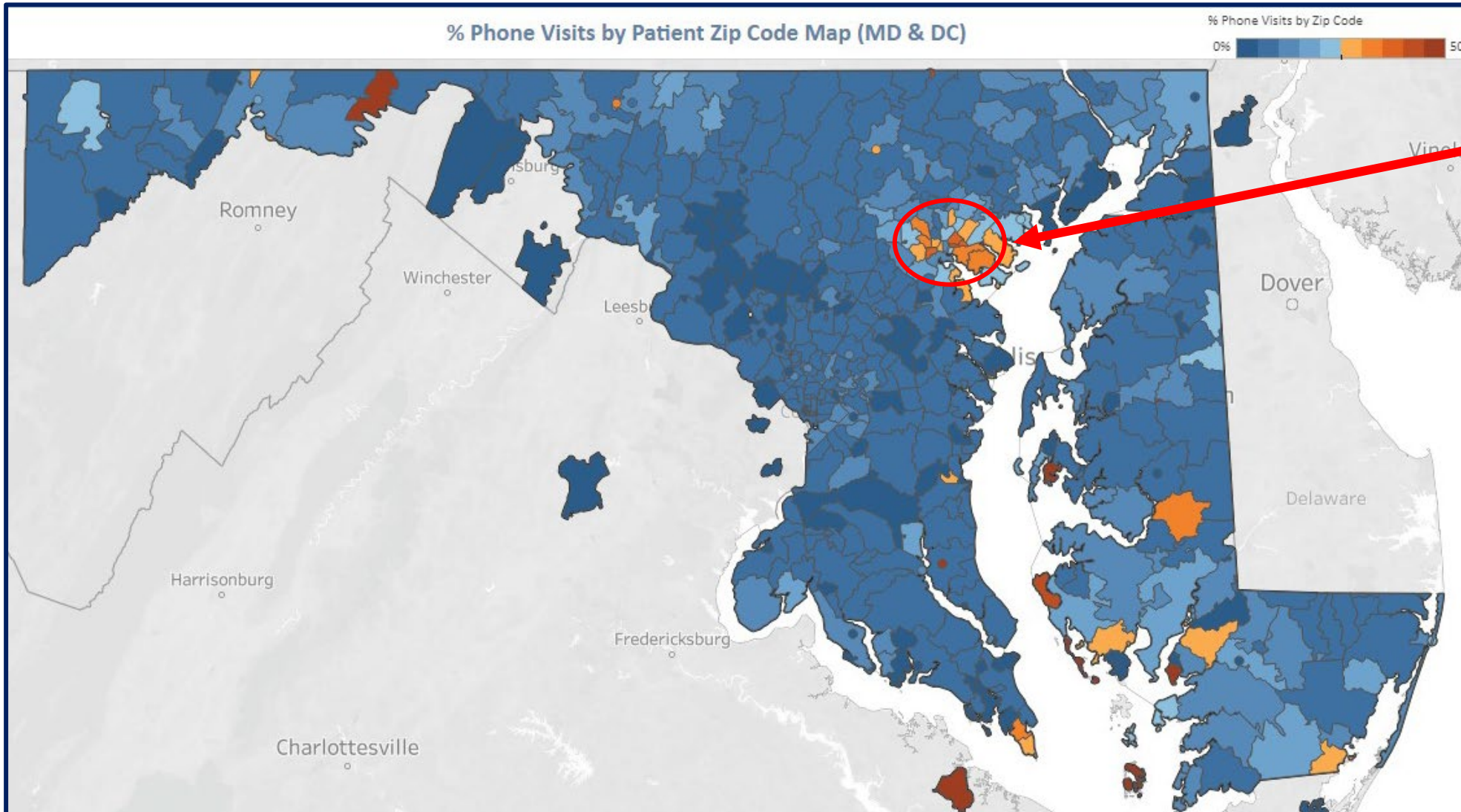
## 3. Age



## 3. Payor



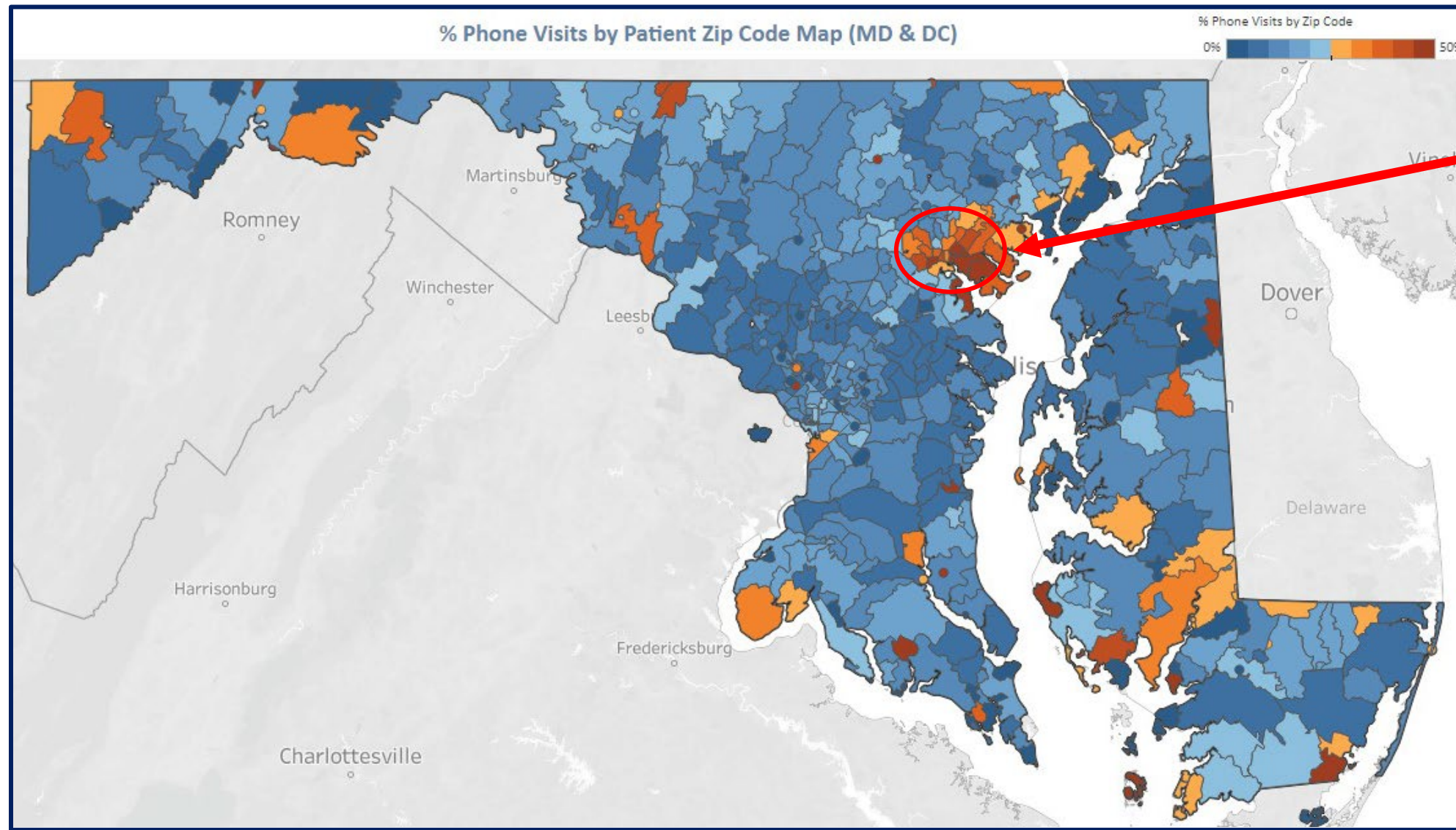
# Video vs. Phone: Zip Code Map



Baltimore City

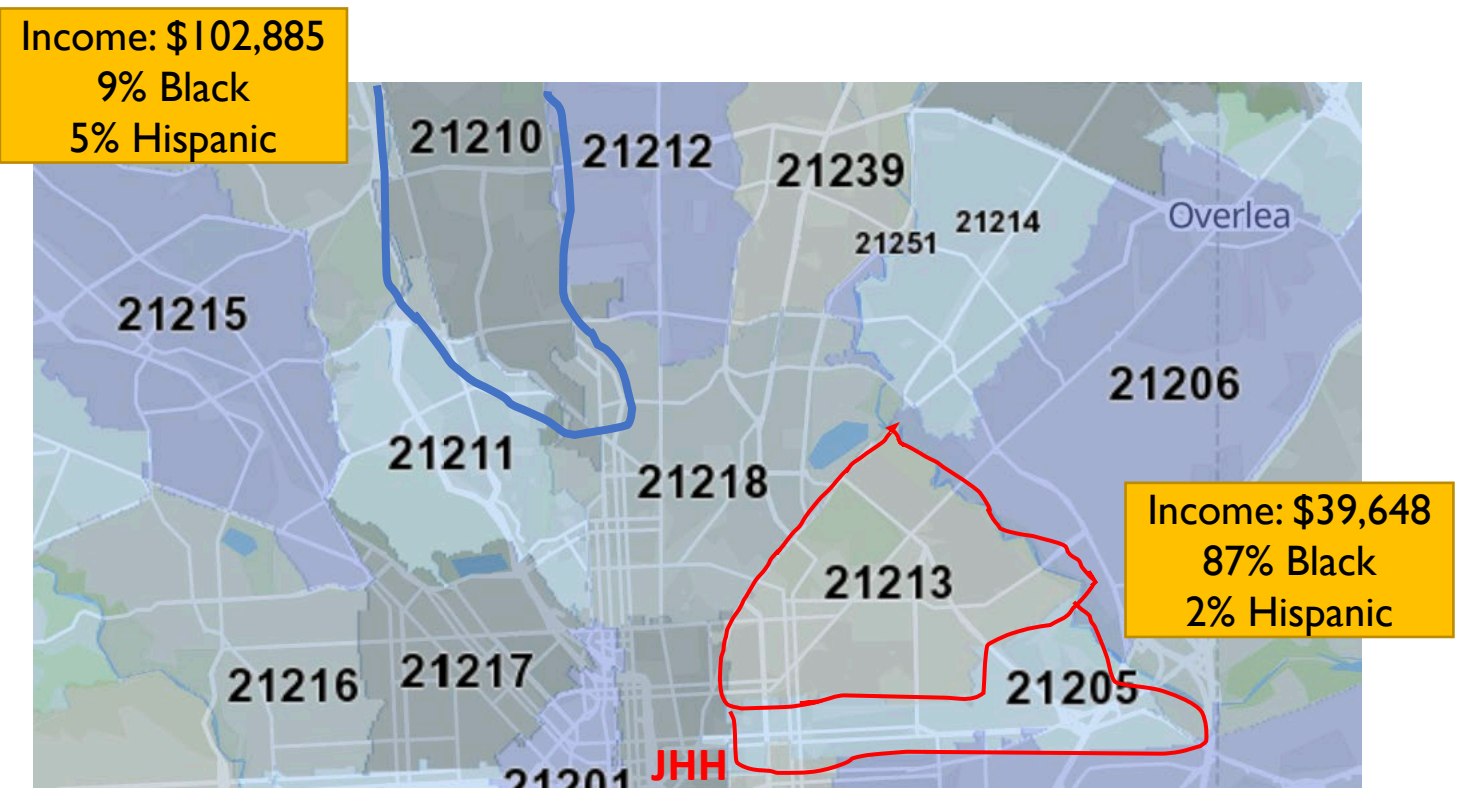


# Video vs. Phone: Zip Code Map, 65yo+



Baltimore City

# Video vs. Phone: Specific Zip Codes



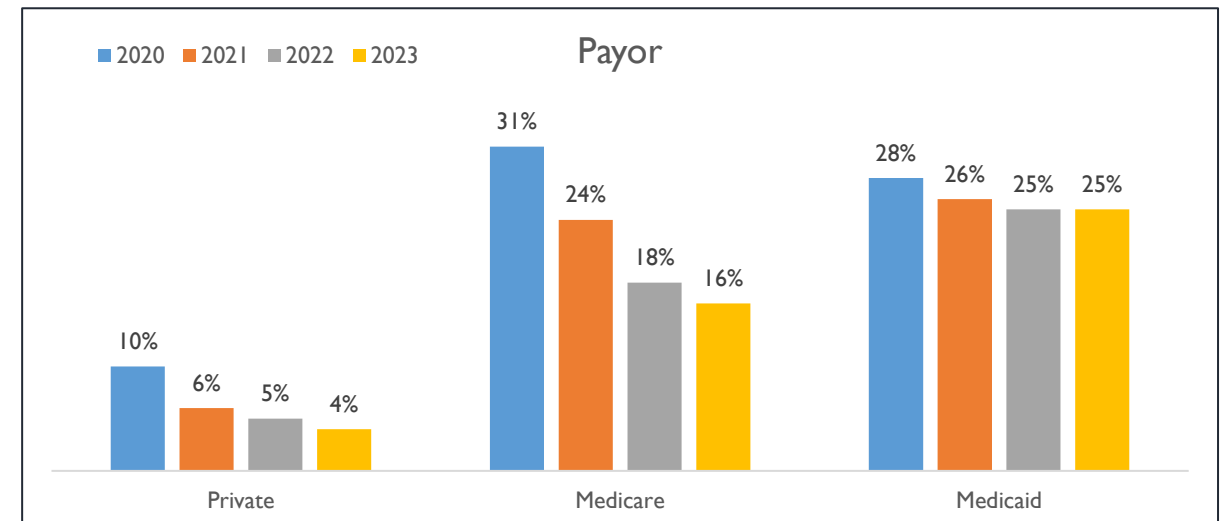
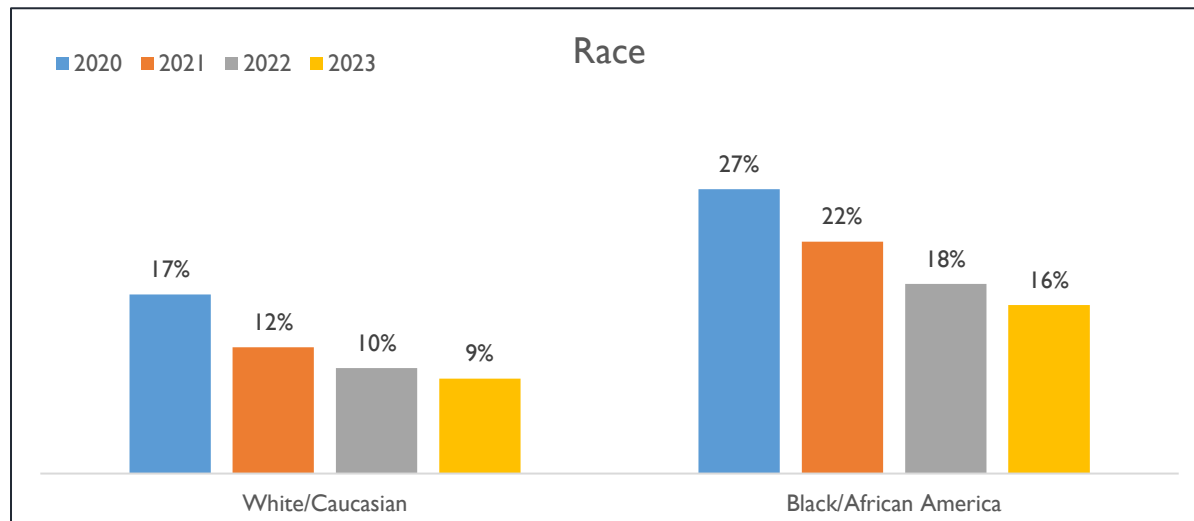
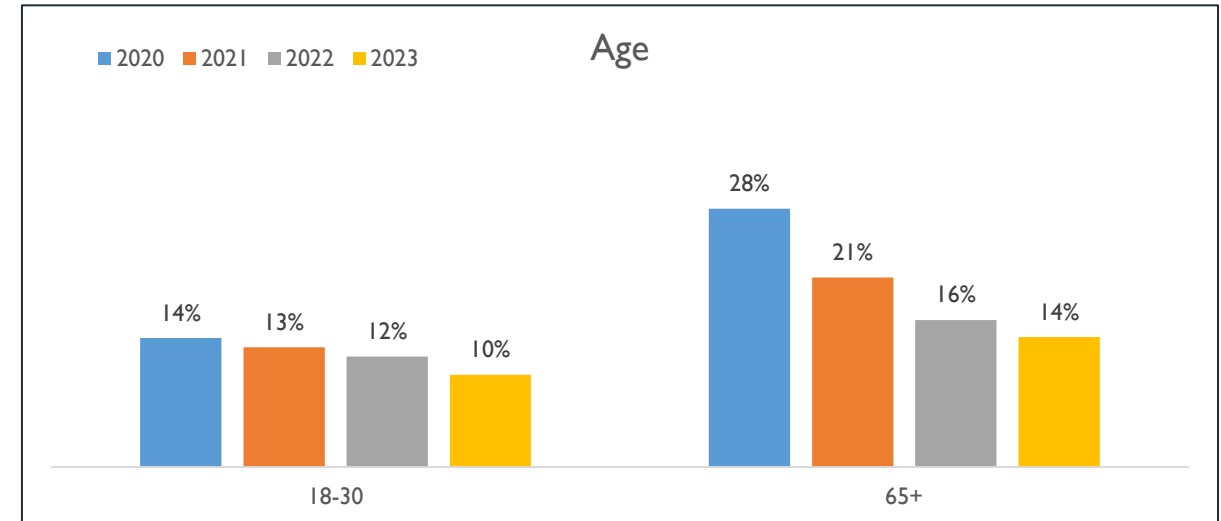
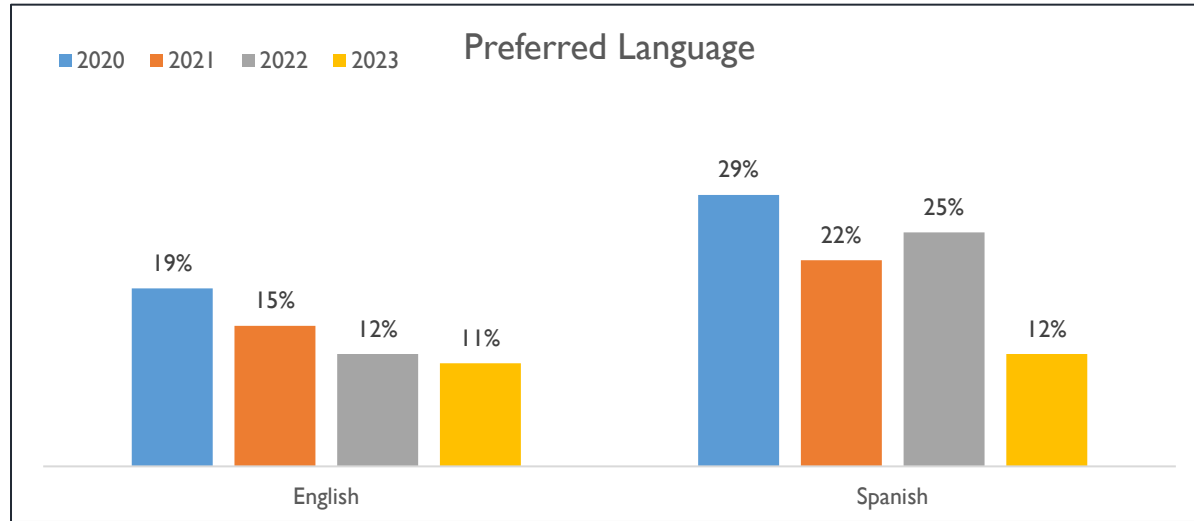
**July 2020 – February 2024**  
**All Ages**

Zip Code	% TM/All	%Phone/TM
All	13%	14%
21213	16%	37%
21205	17%	36%
21210	14%	9%

**65yo+**

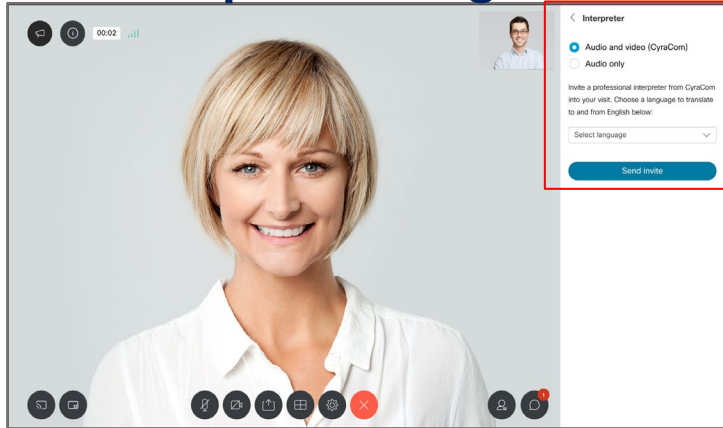
Zip Code	% TM/All	%Phone/TM
All	10%	18%
21213	9%	52%
21205	9%	50%
21210	11%	11%

# Trends in % Audio-Only Over Time

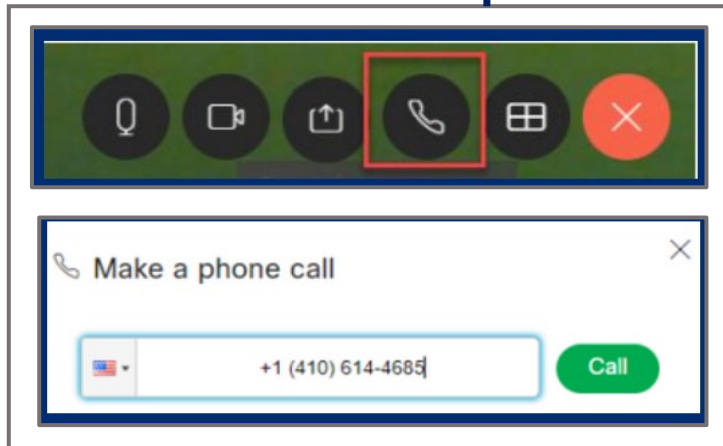


# Accessibility by Language and Ability

## Interpreter Integration



## Dial Out for Interpreter



## Telehealth for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Patients and their Providers

Tony Davis | NC Dep. Of Health and Human Services


**NCDHHS**

### Patient Guidance



**Deaf**

Guidance and resources for Deaf patients.



**Hard of Hearing**

Guidance and resources for Hard of Hearing patients.



**DeafBlind**

Guidance and resources for DeafBlind patients.

### Professional Guidance



**Healthcare Providers**

Guidance and resources for healthcare providers.



**Interpreters**

Guidance and resources for American sign language interpreters.

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh/telehealth-resources>



# AAMC Telehealth Equity Catalyst Awards

## **2022 Award:** Convening Session

- Hosted a session with local and regional stakeholders (76+ groups represented) to connect each other, discuss existing efforts around Baltimore telehealth equity, and plan partnerships for collaboration
- Outcomes include an asset map of local resources, best practices document, policy planning, and collaborative partnerships

## **2023 Award:** Continued Convening

- Continuing efforts from the 2022 award with additional convening sessions
- Refined and distributed a dynamic asset for stakeholders; refined digital equity training program in East Baltimore

## **2024 Award:** MyChart Simulation

- Partnering with Epic to develop and pilot a Health System agnostic MyChart simulation aimed at teaching patient digital health literacy
- Simulation in English and Spanish



# Equitable Access to Telehealth in Baltimore City

June 6,  
2023

Hosted by the Office of Telemedicine

dr. lisa cooper

PROFESSOR OF EQUITY IN HEALTH & HEALTHCARE,  
DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR HEALTH EQUITY

CELEBRATE  
TELEHEALTH  
OPTIONS

ACKNOWLEDGE  
NOT EVERYONE  
HAS ACCESS

2022

INDIVIDUALS WITH THE LOWEST  
INCOMES & EDUCATION + OLDER  
ADULTS FROM BLACK, ASIAN &  
LATINO COMMUNITIES WERE  
LEAST LIKELY TO BENEFIT FROM  
TELEHEALTH SERVICES

POLICYMAKERS,  
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS,  
TECHNOLOGY INNOVATORS,  
COMMUNITY LEADERS,  
& RESIDENTS

MUST WORK TOGETHER TO  
ACHIEVE THIS GOAL

cheryl washington

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF EAST  
BALTIMORE DEVELOPMENT INC. (EBDI)



COVID-19 EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO ADDRESS  
THE DIGITAL EQUITY GAP IN EAST BALTIMORE



EBDI + MICROSOFT DEVELOPED A BLUEPRINT  
FOR ACHIEVING DIGITAL EQUITY IN URBAN  
REVITALIZATION PROJECT AREAS

community-driven surveys in east baltimore showed:

85%

CITED AFFORDABILITY  
AS A BARRIER TO WI-FI

66%

REQUESTED TRAININGS ON USING TELEHEALTH  
APPS & OTHER DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS

NEXT STEPS REQUIRE partnerships

- COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
- ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS
- BUSINESSES
- GOVERNMENT
- BALTIMORE TECH ECOSYSTEM



kenya asli

DIRECTOR OF BROADBAND & DIGITAL EQUITY,  
BALTIMORE CITY OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

2023 DIGITAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK GOALS

- 1 **broadband**  
DEVELOP COMMUNITY BROADBAND SYSTEM
- 2 **digital literacy**  
DEVELOP DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE STANDARDS
- 3 **devices**  
PROVIDE COMPUTERS TO MOST VULNERABLE RESIDENTS
- 4 **technical support**  
MULTI-LINGUAL SUPPORT FOR SETUP & TROUBLESHOOTING

this is not a new challenge,  
just another layer on an  
existing challenge

TO INCREASE EQUITY, REDUCE FINANCIAL BURDEN,  
& IMPROVE PROVIDER-PATIENT RELATIONS

helen hughes

MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF TELEMEDICINE



JMH OUTPATIENT TELEMEDICINE VISITS

<800 → 1,700,000+  
PRE-COVID SINCE MARCH 2020

HIGHER RATES OF TELEPHONE VISITS AMONG  
BLACK, SPANISH-SPEAKING, & OLDER POPULATIONS

MODEL FOR ADDRESSING BARRIERS  
TO TELEHEALTH ACCESS

ra anywhere to  
anywhere program

LAUNCHED 2018

rebecca canino

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TELEMEDICINE



breakout  
takeaways

FOCUS ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP,  
NOT THE  
TECHNOLOGY

CLINICAL  
SYSTEMS BASED  
ON THE PATIENT  
& PROVIDER  
PARTNERSHIPS



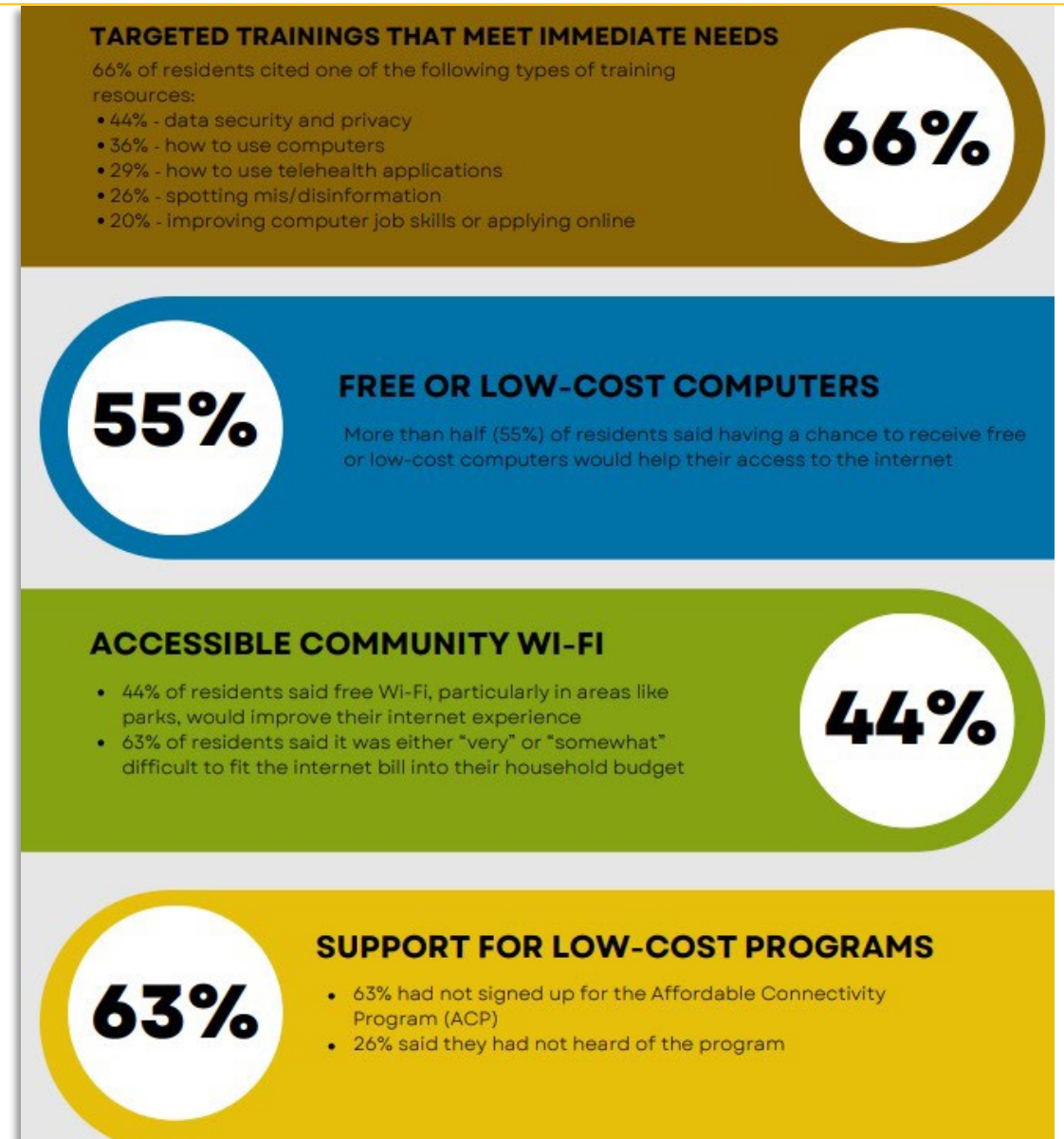
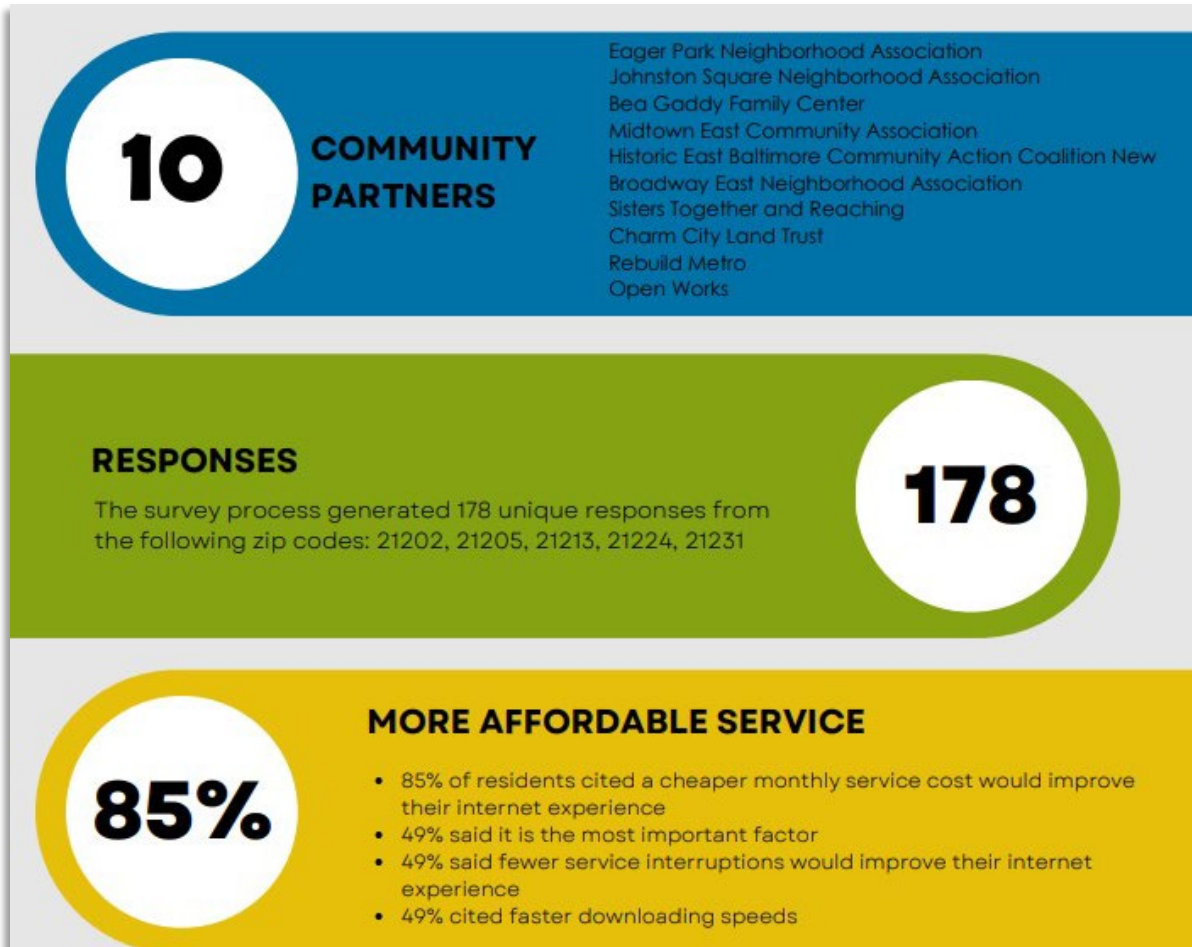
DIGITALLY SCRIBED  
BY CAITLIN MURRAY  
Dancing WITH markers





# East Baltimore Digital Equity Needs

- East Baltimore Development Inc. (EBDI) partnered with Microsoft Airband to analyze digital equity gaps and opportunities
- Surveyed 178 residents



# East Baltimore Coalition Building

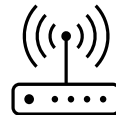


## Community and Outreach Partners



- Baltimore City IT (BCIT)
- Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition
- East Baltimore Development, Inc
- JHU Schools
- JH GCE Office
- JH C-RAC
- Senior Living (2)
- Churches (1)
- Deutsch foundation

## Internet Access



- Project Waves
- Port Networks

## Device Access



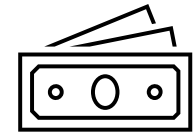
- NEMICORP

## Digital Skills Training



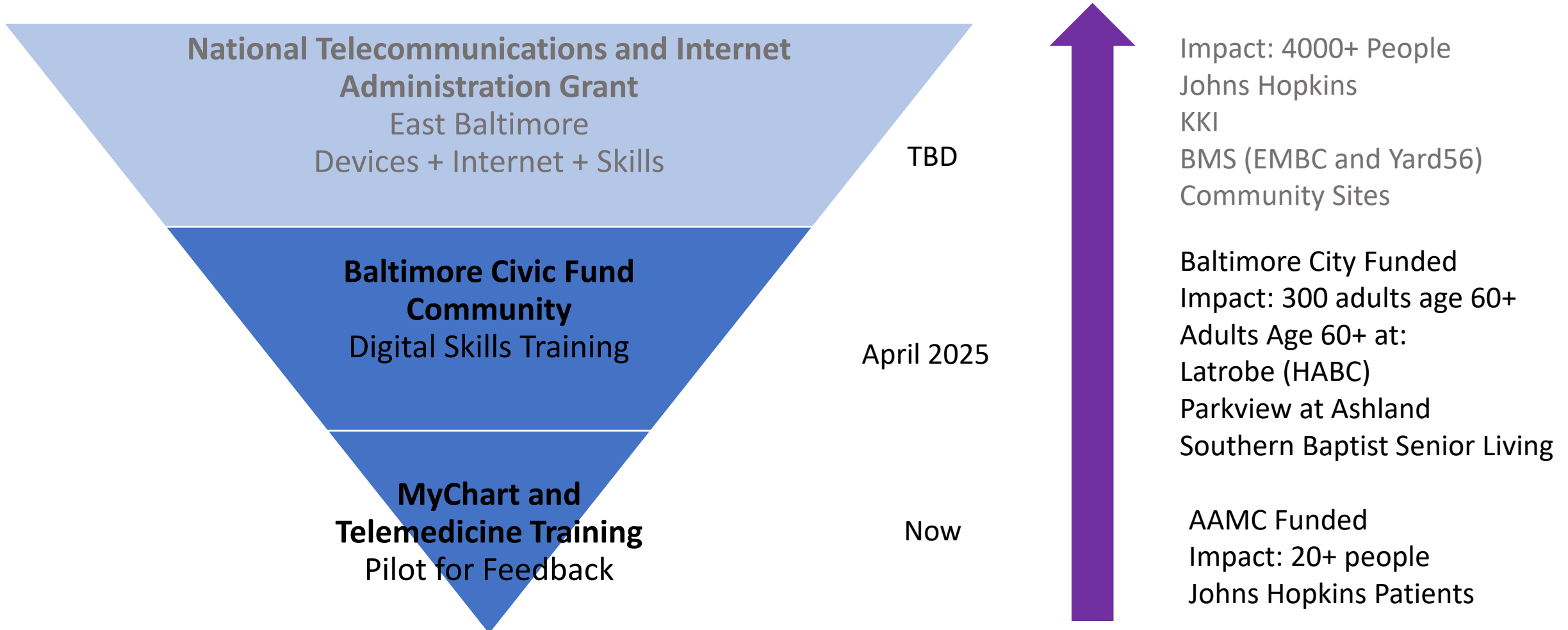
- JH Heat Corp
- JH Telemed + IT
- Epic

## Funding

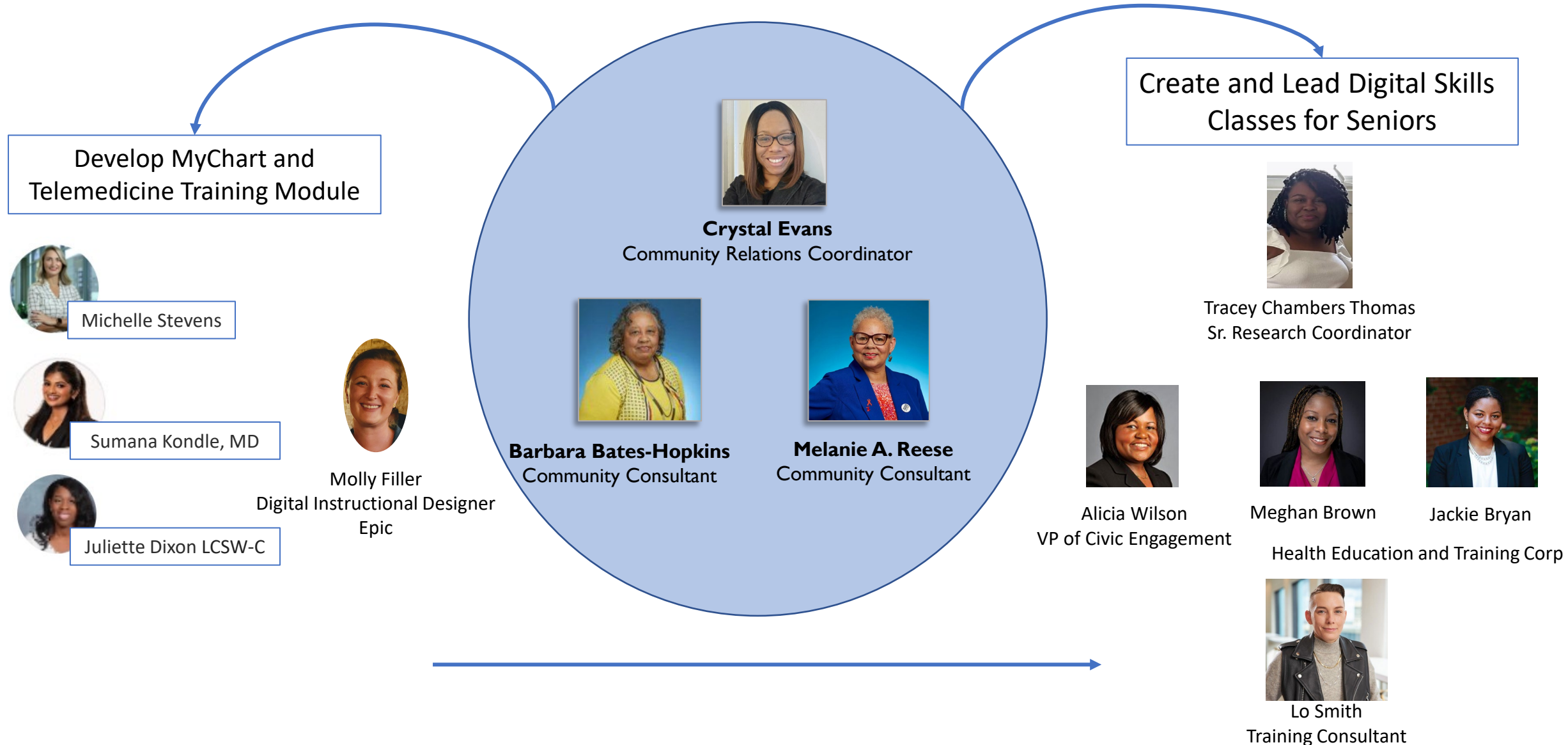


- Baltimore city grants
- NTIA grant

# What: Digital Access Projects



# Community Consultants Supporting Two Projects



# MyChart and Telemedicine Simulation Training

- Pilot usability effort designed to evaluate the acceptability of a MyChart and telemedicine training curriculum for patients
- Simulations available in English and Spanish for both mobile and desktop
- Engagement sessions will include 10 participants with balanced sample of English and Spanish speaking people
- Participants to provide feedback on curriculum's usability, comprehension, and overall satisfaction



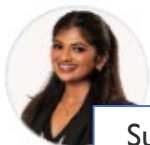
In collaboration with Epic education team



Molly Filler  
Digital Instructional Designer  
Epic



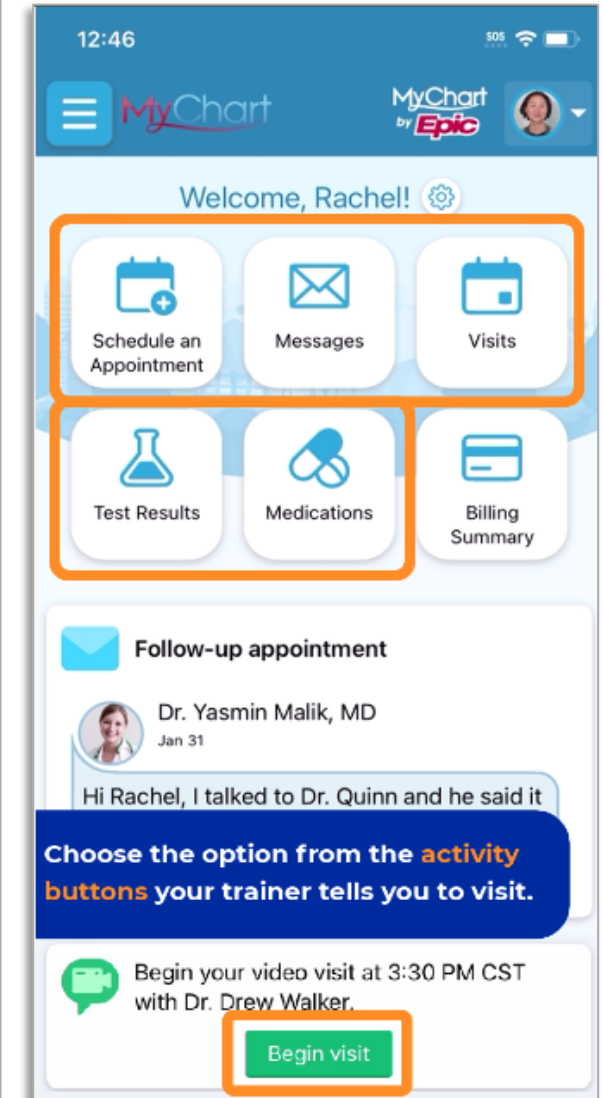
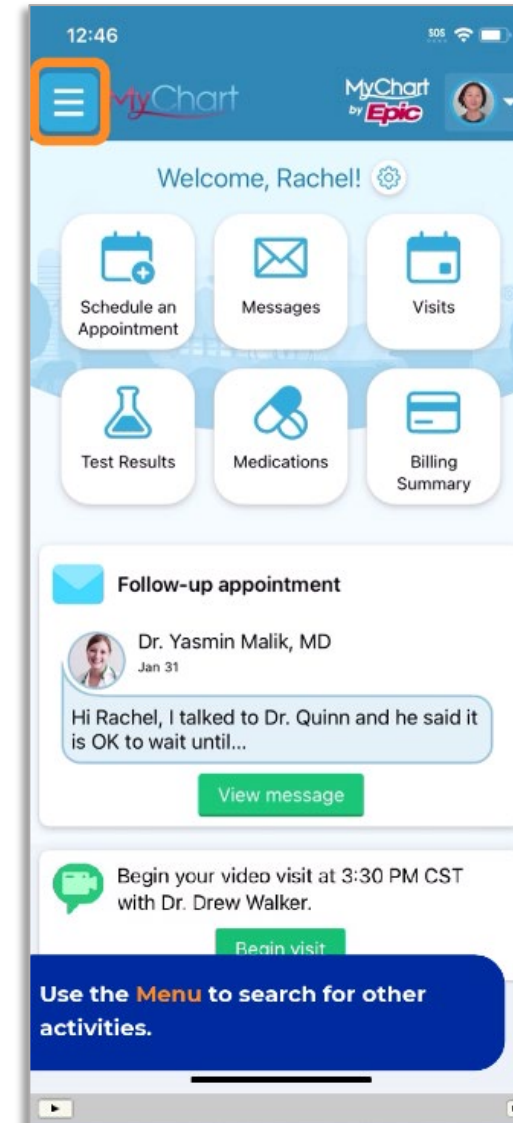
Juliette Dixon LCSW-C



Sumana Kondle, MD



Michelle Stevens





# Baltimore Civic Fund Digital Skills Project



*Baltimore City Awards Ceremony with  
Mayor Brandon Scott*

1. Conduct monthly digital skills training classes (MyChart and Telemedicine) at 3 community sites
  - Southern Baptist
  - Parkview at Ashland
  - Latrobe Homes
2. Evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, and impact of the training sessions



Tracey Chambers Thomas  
Sr. Research Coordinator



Alicia Wilson  
VP of Civic Engagement



Meghan Brown



Jackie Bryan

Health Education and Training Corp (HEAT)

# When: High Level Timeline

Summer 2024      Fall 2024      Winter 2025      Spring 2025      Summer 2025      Fall 2025      Winter 2026      Spring 2026

## AAMC

### MyChart and Telemedicine Training Feedback Pilot

Grant #1  
Funds pilot

Feedback from  
Consultants and  
C-RAC

Feedback from  
Patients in Transplant  
Clinic

## Community Digital Skills Classes

Grant #2  
Funds Community  
Training

Hire Staff  
Consultant Feedback  
IRB

Design and Planning  
Weekly Consultant  
Meetings (?)



Monthly Training  
and Evaluation





# MyChart and Telemedicine Training

## Feedback and Improvements

Feedback	Improvements
Lecture format did not work well	Pivoting to more interactive, try-it-out format
Too much jargon (e.g. two factor authentication)	Used software to ensure wording is more literacy friendly using less technical Jargon
Need some fundamental review of skills (logging in etc)	Hiring consultant from Baltimore City Digital Equity coalition (Lo Smith) for basic digital skills training

# Community Digital Skills Classes

## Feedback and Improvements

Feedback	Improvements
In depth flyer feedback (C-RAC, consultants, ICTR consult)	Significant changes, still need to make text bigger and have less text
Don't make the class too long	Will be on site 2 hours once a month with 30 minutes set up/lunch, 30 minutes of formal interactive class, 1 hour of individual Q&A
Have enough people to support individual needs	Will have 3-5 trainers per session



**Do you want to learn skills to help you manage your health using technology?**

**Join the Johns Hopkins team for a free lunch at community sites and learn how to:**

- Download and use health care apps
  - Save passwords securely
  - Have a video visit with your doctor from your phone or computer
  - Make your smartphone or computer more user-friendly
  - Avoid scams and stay safe online
- You will be asked to share your opinions in a short survey at the end of the session.

**Who Should Join Us?**

- Must be 60 years or older
- Classes will be in English

Please bring a smartphone or computer if you have one.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

**Research Study Details**  
Principal Investigator: Helen Hughes, MD, MPH  
IRB Study Number: JHM IRB #00483494  
Contact Information:  
Phone: 443-488-2072  
Email: digitalskills@jh.edu

Contact us at 443-488-2072 or email digitalskills@jh.edu.

Visit [short link] or scan the QR code to learn more.



These classes are being offered by Johns Hopkins Medicine. You do not have to be a Johns Hopkins patient to participate.

Welcome, Rachel!

- Schedule an Appointment
- Messages
- Visits
- Test Results
- Medications
- Billing Summary

Follow up

Dr. Yasmin Malik, MD Feb 2

Hi Rachel, I talked to Dr. Quinn and he said it is OK to wait until...

View message

New LIPID PANEL results from Thursday February 01, 2024.

Dr. Mickey Quinn, MD

Looking much better, great job!

View results

View all (3)

MyChart Video Visit

Join by 2:00 PM CST

With Dr. Drew Walker

eCheck-in

View Details

Save time while you save paper! Sign up for paperless billing.

Sign up

Dismiss

Care Team and Recent Providers

Dr. Mickey Quinn, MD

Primary Care Provider  
Family Medicine

See provider details and manage



Menu



Visits



Messages



Test Results



Medications



Renee ▾

## Appointment Details



## Not yet time for your video visit

Check out the tasks below that you can complete before your video visit begins.

MyChart Video Visit  
with Dr. Drew Walker

This is a video visit

Wednesday February 22,  
2023

2:00 PM CST (30 minutes)

[Add to calendar](#)[Reschedule appointment](#)[Cancel appointment](#)

## Get ready for your visit!

Test  
hardwareTest that your  
camera and  
microphone are  
working.

Confirm

Let staff know  
you don't need a  
reminder call.

eCheck-In

Save time by  
completing  
eCheck-In ahead  
of time.

Make payment

~~\$30.33~~  
**\$27.30**  
(if paid in full by  
2/22/23)  
Save time by  
completing  
payments ahead  
of time.Want an earlier time? [Get on the Wait List](#)

## Visit Instructions

[Download your visit guide](#) for more information about your upcoming visits.

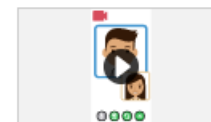
You can use your computer or smartphone to start a video visit. Using your smartphone is the easiest option because it already has a camera and microphone built in.

## Using Your Smartphone

Download the MyChart app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play store.



Watch to Learn

[Learning topics ^](#)

## Video Visits

Learn how to complete check-in and  
start your video visit.[Watch more videos](#)

February 2023



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				



Menu



Visits



Messages



Test Results



Medications



Renee ▾

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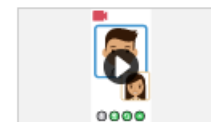
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February 2023



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Menu



Visits



Messages



Test Results



Medications



Renee ▾

## Appointment Details



## Ready to begin video visit

We're ready for you! Begin the video visit, and your provider will be with you shortly.

MyChart Video Visit  
with Dr. Drew Walker

This is a video visit

Wednesday February 22,  
2023

2:00 PM CST (30 minutes)

[Add to calendar](#)[Reschedule appointment](#)[Cancel appointment](#)

## It's time to start your video visit!

[Join video visit](#)When you are ready to talk to your  
doctor, click the button.You have paid the \$27.30 prepay.  
You've completed all payments!Want an earlier time? [Get on the Wait List](#)

Review your questionnaire answers below.

[Additional Check-In Questions](#) [\(Print\)](#)

## Visit Instructions

[Download your visit guide](#) for more information about your upcoming visits.

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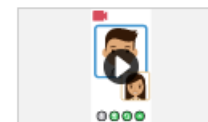
## Using Your Smartphone

Download the MyChart app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play store.

- If you use an iOS/Apple smartphone, make sure your default browser is set to Safari:  
[How to change the default browser on iOS](#). Upgrade to the latest version of iOS for the best experience.



Watch to Learn

[Learning topics](#) ^

## Video Visits

Learn how to complete check-in and  
start your video visit.[Watch more videos](#)

February 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

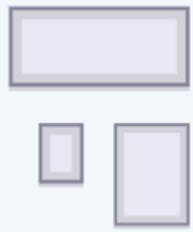
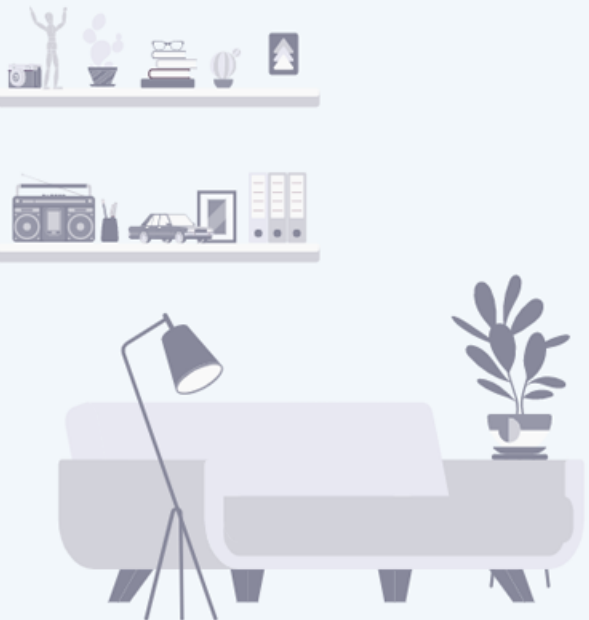


## Hardware Check

Let's make sure your hardware is ready for the call.

- ✓ Camera EPIC36560 - Integrated Camera ▾
- ✓ Microphone Default - Remote Audio ▾
- ✓ Speaker Default - Remote Audio ▾

Join call

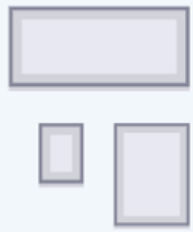
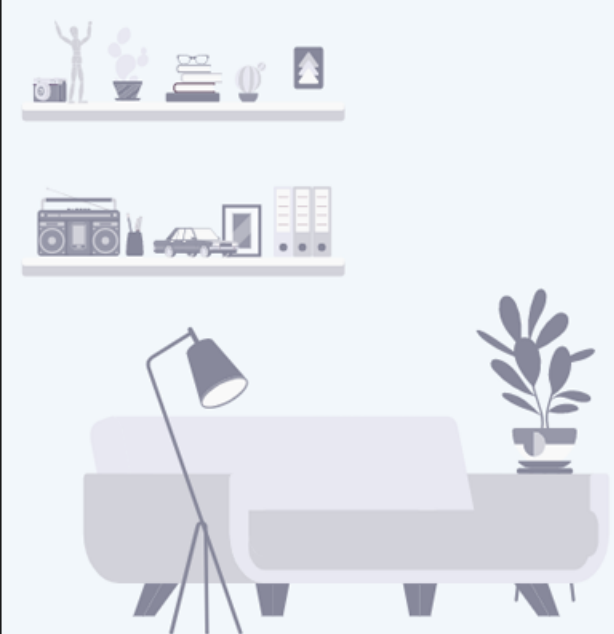


Waiting for others to connect...

Patient Name: Renee Dresnoff

Appointment Time: 2/22/23 2:00 PM

Connection Strength:



Leave call

Mute

Disable Camera

Devices





Epic



Leave call

Mute

Disable Camera

Devices



# Early Feedback

- First class held 5/29 with 5 people in attendance
- Likelihood to recommend 4.4 out of 5
- What went well
  - Size of class, 3 instructor : 5 student ratio
  - Magnifying glasses
  - Range of skill levels
- Needed improvements
  - Decrease length of survey
  - Decrease amount of material
  - Decision about repeated sessions

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

## Digital Skills Classes

*Free Lunch Provided*

DO NOT MISS THIS CHANCE  
to improve your digital health skills!



### Are you 60 years old or older?

Do you want to learn skills to help you manage your health using technology?

If yes, join the Johns Hopkins team for a free lunch and learn about:

- How to use MyChart and telemedicine visits
- Wi-Fi and safely storing password information
- Setting up devices with user friendly features
- Have a chance to ask questions about your technology needs.

### Classes will be in English

Please bring a smartphone or computer if you have one.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

For more details,  
contact us at  
Phone: 667-306-6696  
Email: [digitalskills@jh.edu](mailto:digitalskills@jh.edu)  
Visit [digitalskills.jhmi.edu](http://digitalskills.jhmi.edu)  
to learn more.

These classes are being offered  
by Johns Hopkins Medicine.  
You do not have to be a Johns  
Hopkins patient to participate.



# Longer Term Vision

## NTIA Digital Equity Proposal

This project aims to build partnerships between digital equity-focused community organizations and healthcare systems in East Baltimore to create a **National Blueprint** for integrating digital equity into healthcare and community ecosystems.

East Baltimore Healthcare Institution JOHNS HOPKINS	East Baltimore Healthcare Institution KENNEDY KRIEGER	Community Based Internet Access and Digital Navigation WAVES	Community Based Tech Related Workforce Dev. & Device Refurbishment NEMICORPS	Digital Equity Capacity Building ROBERT W. DEUTSCH FOUNDATION
<b>JHM Telehealth Equity Working Group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Expertise</li> </ul>	<b>Telemedicine Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous FCC Grant to Deploy 5G and to Patients</li> </ul>	<b>Free Internet</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has Provided Free Internet to 3k Households</li> </ul>	<b>Technical Workforce Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established workforce development program</li> </ul>	<b>Philanthropic Experience</b> <p>Well established foundation with experience launching and scaling innovation projects in Baltimore City</p>
<b>Office of Telemedicine &amp; IT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tech Expertise</li> <li>MyChart Training</li> <li>Project with Epic</li> </ul>	<b>KKI IT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Epic EHR, Uses My Chart</li> </ul>	<b>Technical Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has 27/4 Technical Support Line Established</li> </ul>	<b>Tech-related Employment Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employs community members in tech field including device refurbishment</li> </ul>	<b>Strong Network</b> <p>Strong local and national network of CBOs and funding partners</p>
<b>Hopkins Community Connection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-Clinic Social Needs Navigation to 5k+ Patients per Year (Not Digital) at 15+ Clinics (JH, JHBMC &amp; BMS)</li> </ul>		<b>Digital Navigation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership with Harbor Navigators at Digital Harbor Foundation to Leverage 25 AmeriCorps Navigators</li> </ul>	<b>Wrap-Around Social Services</b> <p>Provides psychosocial support and financial coaching to employees</p>	
<b>HEAT Corps &amp; Community Affairs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Based Health Education Classes</li> </ul>				



# Longer Term Vision

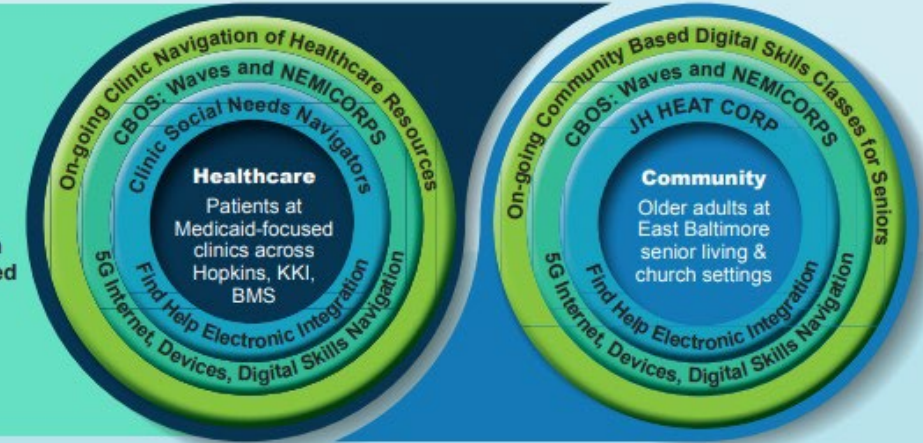
## NTIA Digital Equity Proposal

This project aims to build partnerships between digital equity-focused community organizations and healthcare systems in East Baltimore to create a **National Blueprint** for integrating digital equity into healthcare and community ecosystems.

**Future State with Grant Funding**  
Collaboration and Connection Across Silos  
Comprehensive, Person-Centered Interventions  
National Blueprint for Healthcare and Community Digital Equity Solutions

### Goal 1

Implement and evaluation two models for connecting individuals/ households with community-based digital access resources.



### Goal 2

To strengthen the digital equity ecosystem in East Baltimore through workforce development and roadmap development across healthcare and community partners.



### Goal 3

Develop a national blueprint so that other healthcare systems and communities can replicate these efforts.



# telemedicine



**Thank you!**

Office of Telemedicine Team



**JOHNS HOPKINS**  
M E D I C I N E

# Thank you!

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Questions?  
[HH@jhmi.edu](mailto:HH@jhmi.edu)