



Improving Dermatological Care in Kennebec County

Reducing The Disparity of Rural Healthcare



Background: Skin Cancer in Maine

Skin cancer has been found to be the most common cancer in the U.S., as it's estimated one of five individuals will develop it at some point in their life¹. This number is rising, as melanoma rates have doubled from 1982-2011¹. The incidence of melanoma is highest amongst individuals 80 years of age and older¹, and Maine has the highest median age in the country². Access to dermatologic care is a well-known issue amongst healthcare providers in Maine. Current guidelines suggest a ratio of 1 dermatologist per 25,000 individuals in a population³. However, Maine currently has 1 dermatologist per 34,467 individuals⁴. On top of that, it has proven difficult to recruit dermatologists to Maine, as there are no dermatology residencies in the state. According to the AAMC, physicians are more likely than not to reside in the state of their training⁵. In addition, the 2023 NMRP reported no unfilled dermatology residency across the United States⁶, demonstrating both a desire and need for more residencies. After conducting research and consulting several dermatologists across the state, especially within Kennebec County, we believe the best way to fix this urgent issue is with the creation of Maine's first dermatology residency.

Recommendations

We are recommending the revamp of Maine's attention to dermatologic care. Through consultations with current experts, the consensus is that the best way to do this is through the establishment of Maine's first dermatology residency. Although the underlying issue is lack of dermatologists, another possibility to temporarily improve dermatologic care in Maine is to expand access to telehealth.

Establishment of Maine's first dermatology education program

Include programs such as Maine's first dermatology residency, promotion of advanced practice providers, cultivate educational opportunities for primary care providers to expand dermatological educations.



Improve Maine's telehealth

Expand access to dermatology care in Maine through expansion of telehealth and e-consult capabilities. Expand broadband capability to rural portions of Maine.

Current State

- Maine does not currently have a dermatology residency. According to the data gathered in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are only two states in the country with less dermatologists than Maine.
- Currently, a large portion of Maine does not have the broadband capabilities to provide proper telehealth support. In addition, physicians are only as good as the image they are provided. Thus, it is important to ensure quality of images through proper education or telehealth-specific providers that can help assure quality of images.

Methods

- To provide a comprehensive understanding of dermatological background in Maine, we
 - Conducted a dermatological literature review
 - Conducted interviews with dermatologists within Kennebec County
 - Conducted interviews with primary care physicians within Kennebec County
 - Conducted interviews with local experts in implementation of telehealth and e-consults within Maine.

Resources

1. "Skin Cancer", American Academy of Dermatology Association, Last updated 4/22/22.
2. "Median Age in 2021", StatsAmerica, supported by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, generated on 9/25/2023.
3. Glazer, A, Rigel, D, "Analysis of Trends in Geographic Distribution of US Dermatology Workforce Density", JAMA Dermatology, 2017;153(5):472-473
4. "Maine Physician Workforce Profile", AAMC, 2021.
5. Boyle, P, "America's medical residents, by the numbers", AAMC, 2021
6. "Results and Data, 2023 Main Residency Match", National Resident Matching Program, 2023.

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Disclosures

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Community Partners