



# The Computerworld Honors Program

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## Final Copy of Case Study

**Status:**

Laureate

**Year:**

2013

**Organization Name:**

Medical University of South Carolina

**Organization URL:**

<http://musc.edu/musc>

**Project Name:**

Palmetto State Providers Network

**Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:**

Health

**Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)**

The State of South Carolina has talented healthcare providers and excellent tertiary care centers in addition to a significant primary care network, yet its population suffers earlier death and more disability than almost every other state in the nation. We believe that due to its size and demography, much of it rural, South Carolina could set an example for how to simultaneously improve the health status and economic well being of its population. To do so, its leaders and supporting organizations must take advantage of the information technology and healthcare benefits that are now available. Interventions that can improve health are remarkably straightforward and generic and it is now proven that systematic application of these interventions can reduce disability and improve longevity. A

missing link in South Carolina was a statewide broadband network dedicated to the provision of telemedicine, telehealth, and medical education services with connection to a national backbone such as Internet2. The realization of a broadband network linking rural providers across the state to academic and tertiary centers is absolutely crucial to improving healthcare across South Carolina. This broadband network, Palmetto State Providers Network, is the vehicle over which telehealth, telemedicine, simulated caregiver training, remote ICU monitoring, psychiatric consults, medical education, remote evaluation of acute ischemic stroke and other valuable services is being made available to the rural healthcare providers. PSPN is part of the FCC's rural healthcare broadband pilot program and was the first of the entities to go live.

**When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)**

First phase of project was implemented in 2010. Additional hospitals and clinics were added to the statewide healthcare broadband network in 2011 and 2012. We will continue to add additional healthcare providers in 2013.

**Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)**

Project is complete but was implemented in several phases. PSPN is fully functional and we will continue to add additional healthcare entities in 2013.

**Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)**

State Department of Mental Health (DMH) provides remote psychiatric consults to rural hospitals. Often when patients present in rural hospital emergency rooms they are in need of psychiatric care. Most rural hospital don't have psychiatrists on staff. The DMH uses the PSPN broadband network to deliver hundreds of tele-psy. consults each week. Having access to PSPN as opposed to leased T-1 lines provides much greater quality-of-service and saved DHM thousands of dollars, allowing it to provide more care. "The PSPN circuit has proven to be a valuable link for our Critical Access Hospital. We use the PSPN for internet connectivity, which allows us to connect to websites and VPNs that help us in billing, teleradiology, Radiology transcription, Pharmacy, research, and much more. " Pat Robinson, CEO Edgefield County Hospital Edgefield, S.C. "It has been a great pleasure to have PSPN connections at our sites. We are using the



circuits to move our electronic health records and practice management data between our sites. The latency between sites is far less than what we had with our old provider enabling us to work more efficiently. The reliability has been very good. Being in such a rural location service interruptions are inevitable. As with most nonprofit companies everything has to do with the bottom line. By keeping our communications costs down, it helps us keep more funds for other important things.” Richard Heinlein, CEO, St James-Santee Family Health Center, Inc., McClellanville, SC 29458. “PSPN has made a positive impact at Laurens County Health Care System. We use the PSPN for our TeleHealth program that allows a psychiatrist to remotely evaluate our behavioral patients. We have a high volume of BHS patients who frequently present to our Emergency Department.” Gena Driggers, Laurens County Health Care System, Clinton, SC.

**Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)**

Yes, there were very few if any dedicated statewide healthcare broadband networks that linked rural caregivers in 2010 and today. PSPN serves as a model for other states that have a need for expanded telehealth services into rural communities. It was funded by the FCC’s Rural Broadband Pilot and is acknowledged by FCC as the leader among all other pilot programs across the country

**If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)**

PSPN is the transport network for numerous telemedicine services: Psychiatry, OB/GYN, Pathology, Dermatology, Stroke, etc. PSPN is also being used by rural care providers as a secure means to exchange patient summary data to meet the meaningful use requirements for electronic medical records (EMR) as part of the federal government’s HIT.