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# Digital Navigator Learning Community

Session 1  
June 4, 2024

# Background

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- The Telehealth Consortium, a collaboration between Mass League and C3, received a grant from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI)
  - The Consortium, in partnership with LinkHealth, supports 12 FQHCs with their digital navigator program!
- The fund was established to bridge the digital divide as a component of the Commonwealth's COVID recovery and response efforts

# The Digital Divide & Digital Equity

- The term **Digital Divide** refers to the unequal access to digital technology (connectivity, devices, and digital literacy) between individuals or populations
- **Digital Equity** is the condition in which all individuals and communities have the technology needed for full participation in society
- Historically underserved communities are more likely to face barriers to Digital Equity; the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the Digital Divide

According to 2021 Census Data, 15% of households in MA did not have fixed broadband subscriptions; for households earning <\$20,000 a year, 32% did not have broadband subscriptions

71% of low-income individuals reported in the MA Statewide Digital Equity Survey (2023) that they had difficulty paying for their internet bill compared to 52% statewide.

In the same survey, 40% of individuals with language barriers reported having broadband internet at home and 32% often use a laptop compared to 93% and 67% statewide.

# Digital Access: Three Components



## Device

*Accessibility of devices and device support (e.g., smartphone, laptop)*



## Connectivity

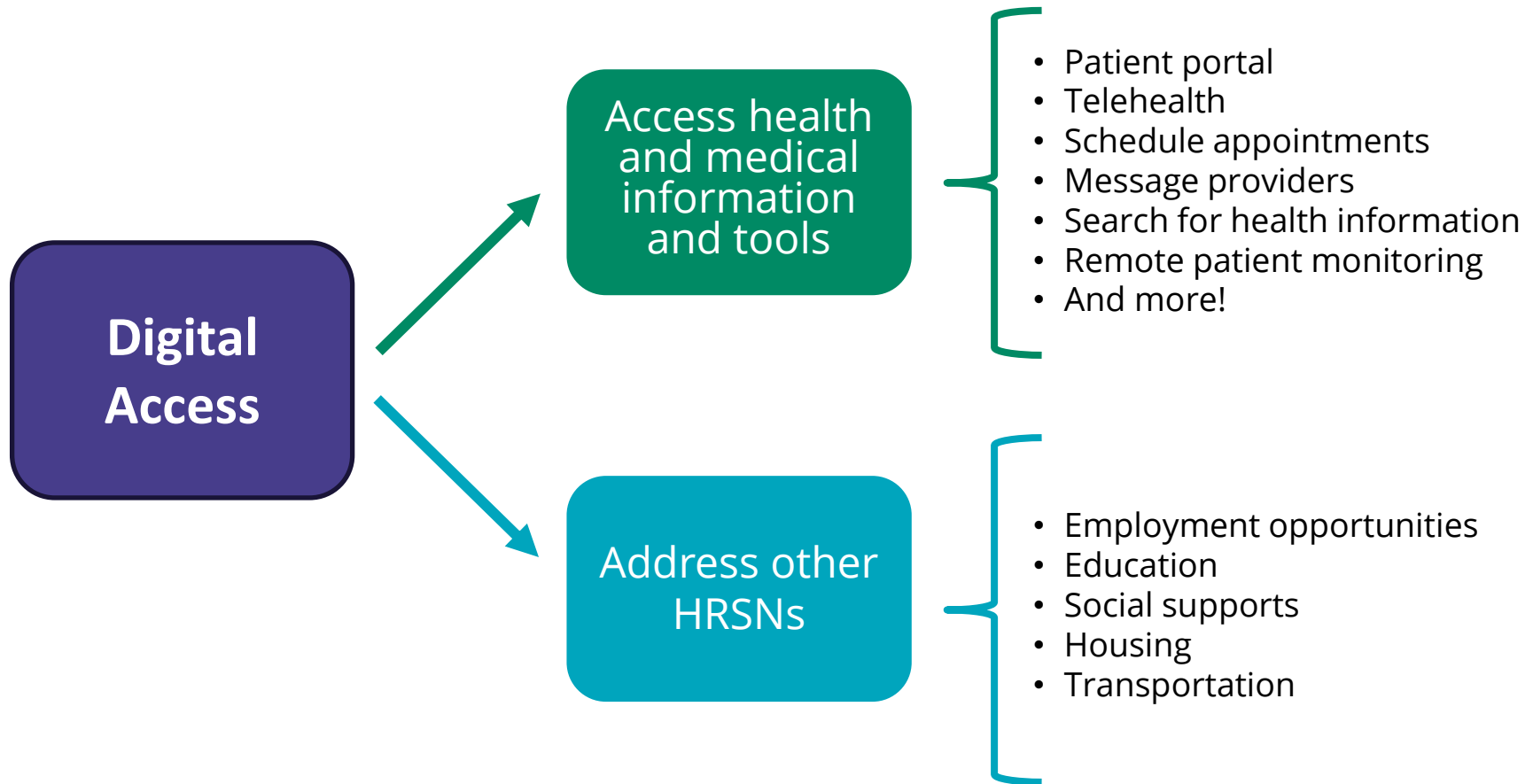
*Affordability and availability of high-speed internet*



## Digital Literacy

*Availability of linguistically and culturally accessible support*

# The Link Between Digital Access & Health



# Digital Access

- Digital access is a person's ability to fully participate in the digital space: having the resources to access medical resources, communicate with providers, and search for health information
- It's important to note that it's not only important for medical care, but for everything!

# Why Digital Navigator

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# Digital Navigators

- Digital Navigators are at the front lines of addressing the digital divide in the communities we serve
  - Supporting and connecting individuals with resources to address digital access needs
- Your work is crucial in helping patients fully participate in society!

# Digital Navigator Program Goals



Directly address the three core barriers to digital equity: broadband access, equipment and digital literacy



Increase the appropriate use of & engagement with digital health tools (telehealth encounters, patient portal use, RPM)



Empower patients in their care to ensure that they are not left behind in the expansion of new digital health tools

# Additional Training & Resources

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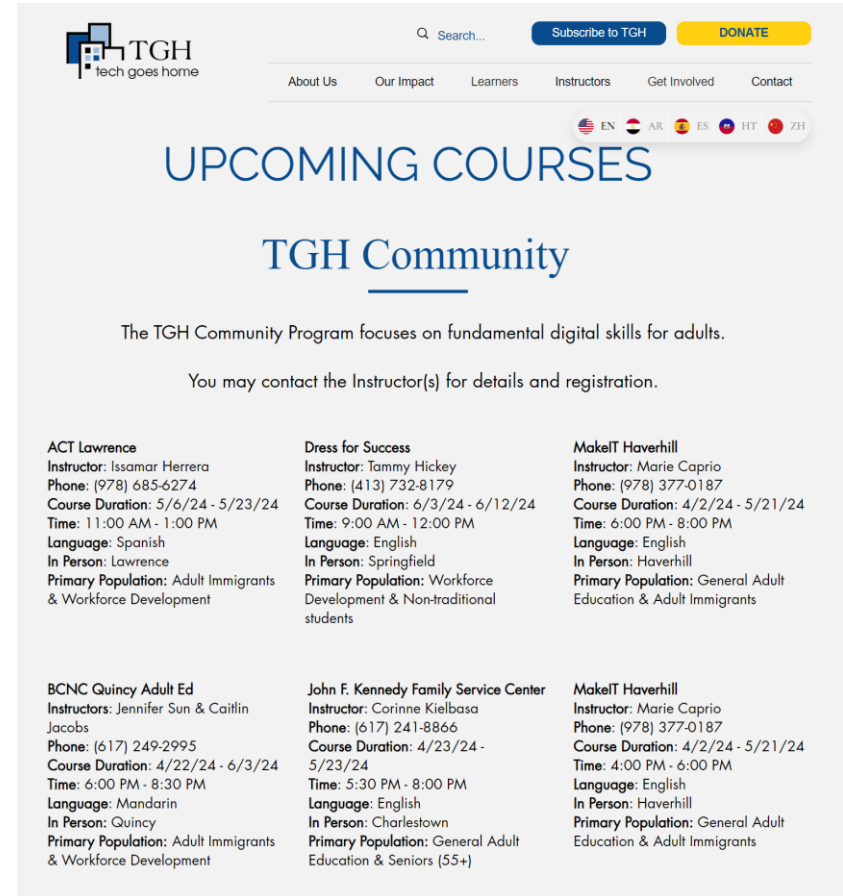
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# Digital Navigator Trainings

- Navigating the Telehealth Neighborhood: A Guide to Telehealth Access for Digital Navigators by Northwest Telehealth Resource Center
  - Access on their [website](#)
- Telehealth Coordinator Online Training by California Telehealth Resource Center
  - Access on their [website](#)
- FQHC Telehealth [Playbook](#)

# Tech Goes Home

**Tech Goes Home** is a Massachusetts nonprofit that addresses the digital divide through free interactive digital literacy training programs, devices, and, if needed, 12 months of internet service



The screenshot shows the Tech Goes Home website with a navigation bar including 'About Us', 'Our Impact', 'Learners', 'Instructors', 'Get Involved', and 'Contact'. A search bar and 'Subscribe to TGH' and 'DONATE' buttons are also visible. The main content area is titled 'UPCOMING COURSES' and 'TGH Community'. Below this, a paragraph states: 'The TGH Community Program focuses on fundamental digital skills for adults. You may contact the Instructor(s) for details and registration.' The page lists six courses in a grid format:

<b>ACT Lawrence</b> Instructor: Issamar Herrera Phone: (978) 685-6274 Course Duration: 5/6/24 - 5/23/24 Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Language: Spanish In Person: Lawrence Primary Population: Adult Immigrants & Workforce Development	<b>Dress for Success</b> Instructor: Tammy Hickey Phone: (413) 732-8179 Course Duration: 6/3/24 - 6/12/24 Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Language: English In Person: Springfield Primary Population: Workforce Development & Non-traditional students	<b>MakeIT Haverhill</b> Instructor: Marie Caprio Phone: (978) 377-0187 Course Duration: 4/2/24 - 5/21/24 Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Language: English In Person: Haverhill Primary Population: General Adult Education & Adult Immigrants
<b>BCNC Quincy Adult Ed</b> Instructors: Jennifer Sun & Caitlin Jacobs Phone: (617) 249-2995 Course Duration: 4/22/24 - 6/3/24 Time: 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM Language: Mandarin In Person: Quincy Primary Population: Adult Immigrants & Workforce Development	<b>John F. Kennedy Family Service Center</b> Instructor: Corinne Kielbasa Phone: (617) 241-8866 Course Duration: 4/23/24 - 5/23/24 Time: 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM Language: English In Person: Charlestown Primary Population: General Adult Education & Seniors (55+)	<b>MakeIT Haverhill</b> Instructor: Marie Caprio Phone: (978) 377-0187 Course Duration: 4/2/24 - 5/21/24 Time: 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Language: English In Person: Haverhill Primary Population: General Adult Education & Adult Immigrants

View all upcoming courses on their website (this is just a small sample!)

<https://www.techgoeshome.org/courses> 13

# Additional Resources

- Lifeline Program
  - A federal program that provides up to \$9.25 off the cost of phone or internet for eligible individuals
  - Eligibility is based on income and participation in government assistance programs (SNAP, SSI, Medicaid, etc.)
    - Apply on their [website!](#)
- Local Libraries, Senior Centers and Community Centers
  - Many community organizations offer digital literacy and device loaner programs (e.g., hotspots, laptops, etc.)

## Additional Resources

- T-Mobile Project 10Million
  - Offering free hotspots with 100GBs of mobile data each year for 5 years to 10 million eligible k-12 students
    - Apply on their [website!](#)
- Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline
  - Provides referrals to over 300 adult education programs that offer one-on-one tutoring, small-group or classroom instruction to adult learners
    - More information on their [website](#)

# Digital Access Follow Up Questions

- Many of your health centers may be starting to ask patients about their digital access needs in the same way that they ask about other health-related social needs:

Question	Next Steps
Do you have a smartphone, computer, or tablet with a camera that can take video calls?	Yes/No. If no, the patient needs support with a device
Do you feel comfortable using your device?	Yes/No. If no, the patient needs a digital literacy training
How comfortable are you using technology to manage your health care remotely?	Comfortable/Not Comfortable. If not, provide the patient with training and resource materials
Do you have a family member or a support person you trust that can help you during a video visit?	Yes/No. If no, provide the patient with training and resource materials