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For Immediate Release
October 30, 2012

E-Health Technology Extends Care Options for Many South Carolinians

Some disparities exist, however, between urban and rural Internet users

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Columbia, SC - A new study from Connect South Carolina finds that more than one-half of Internet users (52%) statewide go online to find medical information or communicate with their healthcare professionals. According to the study, **Broadband: Helping South Carolinians Stay Healthy**, approximately 1.4 million adults statewide stay healthier thanks to home broadband service.

Approximately 274,000 South Carolina adults who go online via their cell phones do so to access e-health applications. E-health usage is not universal, though, and significant differences exist among South Carolina adults of different ages, household incomes, races, and geographic locations.

However, broadband is making major strides in helping South Carolina's healthcare sector provide services for residents who may not otherwise have access to quality healthcare.

Key findings highlighted in this report include:

- In South Carolina, more than one-half of Internet users (52%) go online for e-health purposes. This translates into approximately 1.4 million residents.
- Approximately 274,000 South Carolina adults access e-health applications on their cell phones.

- Only 43% of Internet users age 18-34 use e-health applications, compared to nearly three out of five Internet users age 65 or older.
- South Carolina Internet users living in households with annual incomes between \$25,000 and \$34,999, and those earning \$75,000 or more per year, are the most likely to use e-health applications.
- Less than one-half of rural Internet users (48%) access e-health applications, which represents 319,000 residents.
- The report indicated that 77% of business establishments in South Carolina's healthcare sector use broadband to conduct business.

"E-health, or telehealth, is an important emerging option that carries tremendous promise for increasing access and affordability of quality healthcare while overcoming challenges presented by traditional geographic and cost barriers," said Corey Johns, Connect South Carolina Stakeholder Relations Manager. "This report provides valuable insight on how South Carolinians are leveraging broadband-enabled technologies to expand, improve, and manage their personal medical care options."

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About Connect South Carolina: As the State Broadband Initiative, Connect South Carolina is leading the effort to increase high-speed Internet access, adoption, and use to ensure South Carolina's competitiveness in the connected global economy of the twenty-first century. Connect South Carolina is a public-private partnership designated by the state to work with all broadband providers to create South Carolina's first interactive map of broadband coverage. This work serves as a foundation for addressing remaining service gaps while also engaging state, regional, and local leaders in workforce development activities designed to bridge South Carolina's digital divide. For maps, research, or to get involved with efforts in your community please visit: www.ConnectSC.org.

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