CARDI·OH
Ohio Cardiovascular and Diabetes Health Collaborative

CAPSULE

Closing the Digital Divide on Affordable Internet Access

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS: L. Austin Fredrickson, MD, Northeast Ohio Medical University; Seuli Brill, MD, The Ohio State University; Mary Jo Roach, PhD, Case Western Reserve University; Anne Gaglioti, MD, MS, Case Western Reserve University; Adam Perzynski, PhD, Case Western Reserve University, on behalf of Team Best Practices*

Employment, education, banking, food assistance, and many other basic social and economic opportunities depend on internet access. For people with chronic conditions, a lack of internet access adds an extra layer of difficulty to scheduling appointments, messaging a health care provider, receiving lab results, and renewing prescriptions.[1] Many locations in Ohio are digitally disconnected.[2] To address this barrier, practices screening for social needs can include screening questions about broadband access and provide referrals to connectivity programs and resources.

Two national programs dedicated to addressing the digital divide are outlined below.

EVERYONE ON

EveryoneOn is a digital inclusion non-profit that connects people in under-resourced communities with digital literacy training and access to affordable broadband, computers, and internet-connected devices. Resources can be searched for by zip code using the organization's offer locator tool online or via phone: (301) 539-9192.

USAC Lifeline Support

Lifeline is a federal program that offers discounts on internet service and connected devices to low-income households. Qualifying individuals and families can sign up by contacting their internet provider, filling out an application online, or mailing in a paper application (available in English and Spanish). Qualification and application instructions are available at lifelinesupport.org/get-started/.

For more information, access Cardi-OH's expanded resources on overcoming the digital divide and strategies to maximize patient communications with digitally excluded patients.

References
1. Sheon AR, Bolen SD, Callahan B, et al. Addressing disparities in diabetes management through novel approaches to encourage technology adoption and use. JMIR Diabetes. 2017;2(2):e16. doi:10.2196/diabetes.6751.
2. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Ohio: Broadband Access. https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/ohio?year=2025&measure=Broadband+Access. Published 2025. Accessed April 16, 2025.

*Social Determinants of Health Working Group

For more information head to Cardi-OH.org.