

Telemedicine helping rural communities

By Elizabeth Zach, High Country News

As a young infectious diseases physician in San Francisco in the 1990s, Javeed Siddiqui could easily treat local patients suffering from HIV. As drugs became more effective, he would often simply need to check in with his patients, ask how they were doing both physically and emotionally, and refill prescriptions.

But there were also patients who traveled hours from their homes in northern rural California, taking a day off from work. By the early 2000s, he began wondering what he could do differently, via electronic communications.

Siddiqui, now 50, is today the medical director of UC Davis' telemedicine program and also of the California Institute for Science and Innovation at UC Berkeley.

The use of telemedicine is widespread and expanding, said Siddiqui.

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