

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Contact:**

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**Meridian and Samsung Donate Smartphone Devices to Healthcare Providers in Michigan**

*Donations make virtual care more accessible in rural and underserved communities*

**Detroit (Oct. 21, 2020)** – [Centene](#) and [Samsung](#) Electronics America are working together to expand access to telehealth for individuals and families living in rural and underserved communities. Meridian, as part of the Centene family, will be deploying this initiative in Michigan by supplying local healthcare providers with Samsung Galaxy A10e smartphones to distribute to patients who would not otherwise have access to healthcare services virtually.

Meridian will deploy 425 Samsung Galaxy A10e smartphones, with 90 days of free wireless service, to select federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), health systems, other healthcare providers and community support organizations. Many of the selected providers will be in rural and underserved communities, where there can be barriers to receiving in-person healthcare. The providers and organizations will then determine which of their patients need the devices and then distribute them accordingly.

As of mid-July, a [CDC survey](#) found that 44.4 percent of respondents reported delaying or not receiving care for various reasons, including concerns and challenges around COVID-19. Meanwhile, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, rural residents already exhibited higher mortality rates and higher incidences of preventable inpatient and emergency room admissions than their counterparts in urban areas.

“Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we’re increasingly seeing the important role telehealth can play in maintaining a person’s health. If a person does not have access to a compatible device it can create gaps in care, especially among rural and underserved communities,” said Sean Kendall, Meridian Plan President and CEO for Michigan. “Through this program with Samsung, we’re bridging that gap and making healthcare accessible for more people by empowering them with the devices they need.”

“We are thankful for Meridian, Centene, and Samsung for helping our patients receive access to telehealth and medical care during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Jan Pillai, Covenant Community Care. “Social distancing is critical in slowing the spread of COVID-19 and the donation of these devices will allow patients to get the care they need from the safety of their home.”

“The global pandemic has prompted the rapid acceleration of digital transformation, especially in healthcare,” said Taher Behbehani, General Manager and Head of Mobile B2B Business at Samsung Electronics America. “With one billion telehealth visits expected to take place by the end of 2020, Samsung is committed to supporting healthcare institutions with solutions that transform the patient experience remotely and help doctors and nurses work more efficiently. We’re thrilled to partner with

Centene and Meridian on this effort to create critical healthcare access for vulnerable patients during this uncertain time.”

Meridian has been supporting Michigan residents since 1997 across its Medicaid, Medicare and Ambetter plans. Their efforts to address the social determinants of health reinforce their long-standing commitment to supporting the whole health of their communities, one person at a time.

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**About Meridian**

Meridian in Michigan provides government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors, and individuals with complex medical needs primarily through Medicaid (MeridianHealth), Medicare Advantage (WellCare), Medicare-Medicaid Plans (MeridianComplete), Medicare Prescription Drug Plans (WellCare), and the Health Insurance Marketplace (*Ambetter* from Meridian). Meridian is a wholly owned subsidiary of Centene Corporation, a leading multi-national healthcare enterprise committed to helping people live healthier lives. For more information about Meridian, please visit [www.mhplan.com](http://www.mhplan.com).