

Didactic

The New Normal: Tips to Make Telemedicine Part of Your Permanent Practice

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Objectives

- To understand **tactics to develop a well-rounded telehealth program**: move telemedicine into part of your standard operations
- To outline the **elements of a telemedicine quality program**
- To understand **considerations of health equity** in your telemedicine program and proactively & reactively address patient barriers
- To outline **infrastructure components** needed to support ongoing success of your telehealth program

Building the Plane While You're Flying It



Developing a Well-Rounded Telemedicine Program

Telemedicine as part of your “normal” operations

- **Telemedicine is here to stay**— shift from the mindset of telemedicine as a temporary patch to being part of your standard menu of options for patients.
- **Get feedback from providers & staff:** What’s going well and what could be improved?
- **Get feedback from patients:** How are your tools and resources working?
- **Assess your utilization data:** Which clinics/providers are doing well - what best practices can they share? Which are struggling - what are their barriers/needs?

Moving past implementation

- **Stakeholder needs will change as you move from rollout, to maintenance & optimization.** The work & the roles involved vary with each of these phases.
- **Develop support materials & tools for each:**
- **101:** Core materials to teach the basics of telemedicine processes & requirements – goal to successfully complete telemedicine visits
- **201:** Strategic considerations around enhancing access, reach and patient satisfaction; calibrating telemedicine/in-person care
- **Advanced Telehealth:** How to consider alternate innovations to advance care options – consider asynchronous care, remote patient monitoring, eHealth options, etc. where you have patient demand/provider interest

Telehealth Quality Improvement Program

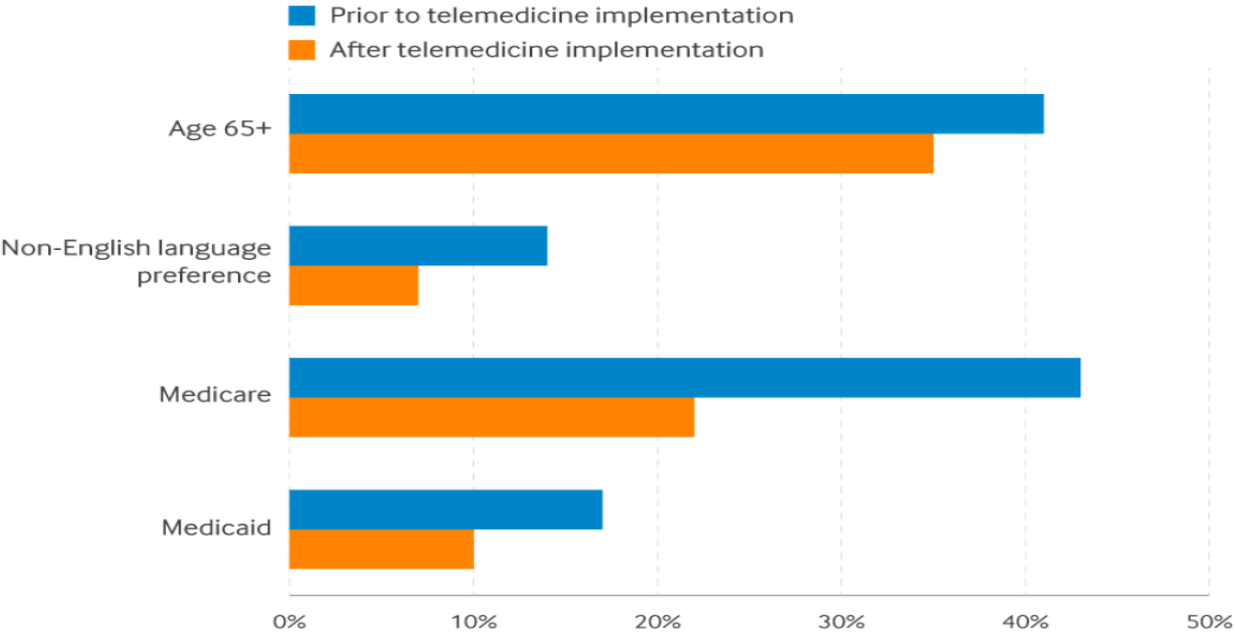
Link with Existing QI/A Program

- Event/Incident Reporting: Process to report and respond to adverse events & near misses, and track trends
- Patient Experience Surveys: seek input from your patients, assess this data/comments and track trends, areas for improvement
- Patient Complaints: Process to report and respond to patient concerns, and track trends related to these
- QA & Peer Review: Process for chart review to assess appropriateness of care, documentation, etc.
- Quality Improvement Projects: Targeted PDSA project work to impact areas identified as in need of improvement (from the above or based on desired improvement in efficiency, clinical outcomes, utilization, etc.)



Addressing the Digital Divide

Patient Visits by Age, Language and Insurance Before and After Telemedicine Scale-Up



Efforts to increase equity in access to care

- Make it a priority!
- Listen to groups with access challenges
- Work with them to design interventions
- Connect resources to patients
- Advocate for better broadband
- Simplify!

Source: Nouri S, et al. Addressing equity in telemedicine for chronic disease management during the COVID-19 epidemic. *NEJM Catalyst* 2020

Health Equity

- **Recognize bias:** services must be offered to ALL patients despite your assumptions of whether they will want to utilize them:
 - *“My elderly patients struggle with technology, they’ll never use telemedicine.”*
- **Develop patient-facing materials in multiple languages & formats** (i.e. written & video)
- **Consider reading level;** seek input from patient advocacy groups.
- **Provide opportunities for in-person support:**
 - Staff/volunteers in clinic to help “connect” patients after in-person visits so they are ready next time
 - Process to call patients in advance of their first visit to help set up
- **Ensure your video platform has interpreter services & closed-captioning options** built in and easy to use
 - Have to comply with Americans with Disability Act, “reasonable accommodation”

A Word About Technology

- Evaluate your telemedicine platform(s)
- If possible, consolidate to as few platforms as possible
- Don't overspend!
- Look for opportunities to consolidate or to leverage pre-existing relationships

My telemedicine lifehack is...

The three most important aspects of technology are:

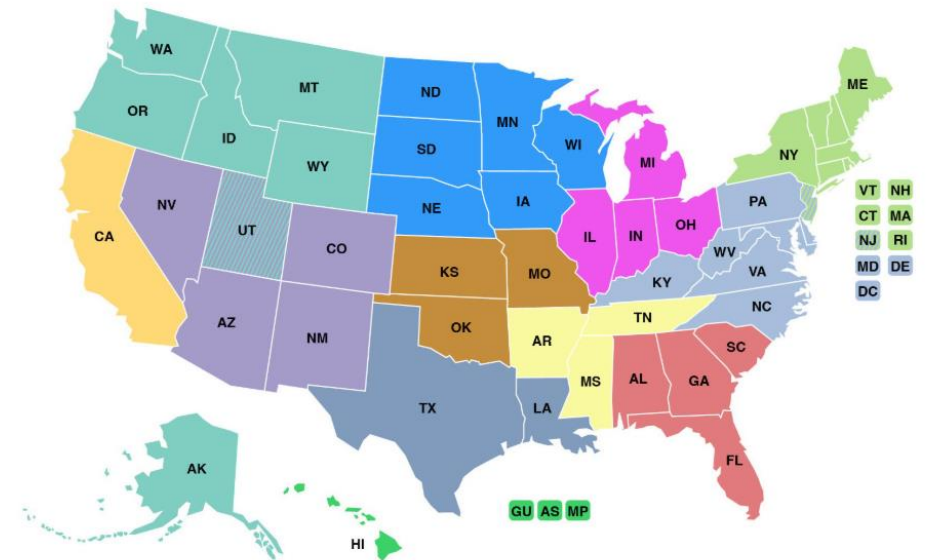
1. Usability
2. Reliability
3. Privacy/Security

Resources

- **American Medical Association. Telehealth Implementation Playbook.** <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/digital/ama-quick-guide-telemedicine-practice>
- **HRSA Telehealth Resource Centers.** <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/telehealth/resource-centers>
- **American Telehealth Association.** <https://www.americantelemed.org/covid-19/>

Telehealth Resource Centers (TRCs)

If you are a provider looking for technical assistance, please contact the regional TRC in your state. You can also visit the websites of the [national TRCs](#) for additional resources focused on technology assessment and telehealth policy.



Your Telemedicine Questions, Answered

Please submit your questions through the Q&A box

