

Telehealth and COVID-19

Overview of Telehealth's Role During the Pandemic



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In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, health care delivery systems are seeking innovative solutions to deliver care while limiting patient and provider exposure to the virus. Public and commercial payers have implemented three major policy changes to address the increased demand for telehealth:



Phone and video visits are now covered by Medi-Cal, Medicare, and most commercial payers.



Phone and video visits are now paid at the same rate as in-person visits for Medi-Cal and most commercial payers.



Geographic limitations prohibiting the use of live video telehealth were removed by Medicare.

Systems are considering how they can implement solutions quickly, how these tools will be accepted by patients and incorporated smoothly into provider practice, and how to sustain telehealth over the long term.

Telehealth: What It Is, How It Improves Care

INCREASE ACCESS TO SPECIALISTS

PATIENT - SPECIALIST

LIVE VIDEO



Live, two-way video between patient with remote PCP and tele-specialist

IMPROVE PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

PATIENT - PCP

DIRECT TO CONSUMER

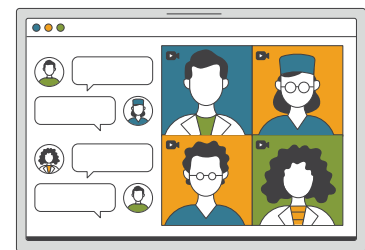


Live, two-way video between patient and generalist or PCP

REDUCE SPECIALTY REFERRALS

PCP - SPECIALIST

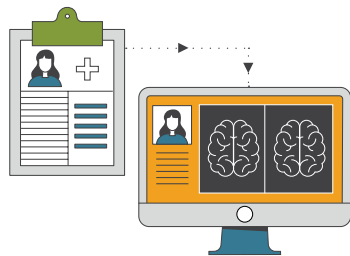
DISTANCE LEARNING



Videoconference-enabled training of PCPs by specialists

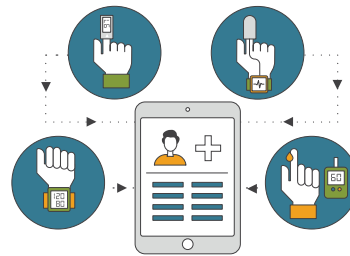
SYNCHRONOUS (LIVE)

STORE AND FORWARD



Transmission of history and images to specialist for diagnosis and treatment

REMOTE PATIENT MONITORING



Remote monitoring of patient with video and peripheral devices

E-CONSULT



Electronic message exchange, including clinical question and related patient information

ASYNCHRONOUS

Telehealth Triage

Providers can deploy any of the following virtual tools and technologies to provide quality, safe, and efficient treatment so that face-to-face visits are only used when absolutely necessary:

- **Provider education:** Host virtual grand rounds to connect providers to specialists for education on COVID-19 cases and best practices in telehealth.
- **Pre-visit screenings:** Assess patients prior to visits and route them to the care they need using symptom checkers, chatbots, nurse advice lines, and text messaging.
- **E-consult:** Enable provider-to-provider consults to resolve provider questions prior to specialty referrals, and help reduce the overall need for subsequent specialty visits.
- **Remote patient monitoring:** Collect patient health information such as weight, blood pressure, or glucose levels virtually to avoid the need for patients to present in person.
- **Virtual provider-to-patient visit:** Connect patients in their homes with their treating providers for a scheduled follow-up or post-discharge care visit.

The pandemic has changed the way health care is being delivered, and telehealth has played a key role in addressing immediate needs for patient care delivery safely, efficiently, and effectively.



The California Telehealth Policy Coalition

The coalition is the collaborative effort of over 60 statewide organizations and individuals who work collaboratively to advance California telehealth policy. The group was established in 2011 when AB 415 (The Telehealth Advancement Act) was introduced and continues as telehealth becomes integral in the delivery of health services in California. Convened by the Center for Connected Health Policy, the coalition aims to create a better landscape for health care access, care coordination, and reimbursement through and for telehealth.

Visit the coalition online at www.cchpca.org/about/projects/california-telehealth-policy-coalition.