Best Practices in Telehealth

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The following planning members have no financial relationships to disclose: Cynthia Miller, MD, Sarah Walker, MS and Jennifer Price.
Learning Objectives

- Discuss the basic elements of telehealth and its advantages in the provision of medical care.

- Review best practices implementing and sustaining a successful telehealth initiative.

- Describe potential challenges and pitfalls with a telehealth model and real-world solutions for overcoming them.
Agenda

- Speaker Introductions (5 minutes)
- Webinar (45 minutes)
- Q & A via chat feature (10 minutes)
Finger Lakes Community Health

Community & Migrant Health Center (FQHC)
- Serving mostly rural communities
- Providing comprehensive medical, dental, mental health, SUD, nutrition, care management, advocacy services to the communities we serve.

Agricultural Worker Voucher Program in 42 Counties of NYS

8 Full Time Health Center Sites
- Community Dental Program (schools, Head Starts, Jails)
- Mobile Medical Program (22 Counties)
- Extensive Care Management Services

2019 Stats (UDS):
- 28,927 Total Users
- 7,096 Ag Workers
- 64% of patients want to be seen in a language other than English
Where We Are:
Why Telehealth?

Integrating telehealth technologies into our model of care allows us to:

- Eliminate **geographical barriers** by bringing many specialty care providers into our health centers virtually
- Addresses **workforce shortages**
- **Reduce stigma** (Integration of BH into FQHC’s using telehealth)
- Allows for more **collaborative care** between primary care team and specialists. New relationships between providers/specialists
- Extensive **educational opportunities** for our providers
- An important tool in **Value Based Care**

Telehealth will be a key player in sustainability of FQHC’s!
Uses For Telehealth

- Specialty Care in local community health centers
  - Consults
  - Follow-ups
  - Screenings
  - Exams
  - Pre- and Post- Operative Care
  - Build relationships with PCP

- Primary Care
  - Urgent Care
  - Follow-up
  - Emergency continuity of care
  - Site to site
  - Direct to patients' home

- Distance Learning
  - Precepting
Integration of technology into our traditional system of communicating:

- Administrative uses
  - Meetings
- Staff Development
- Clinical uses:
  - Specialty services into local health center
  - Health center to health center
  - Staff deployed with equipment into the home or where the patient is at

List of some of the available services:

- TeleHIV/AIDS Care
- TeleHCV (HepC)
- Interpretation Services
- TeleHormone Therapy
- TeleMental Health
- TelePediatric Neurology
- TelePediatric Dentistry
- TelePsychiatry
- TeleRegistered Dietitian
- TeleTAC (Treatment Adherence Counseling)
- Digital Retinopathy Screenings
- Provider Pre-cepting
- TelePrimary Care
Telehealth at FLCH During COVID 19

Direct to consumer virtual visits

- Patient in the home
- Provider in the home and Patient in the health center
- Both Provider and Patient in the home

Specialty Care in local health center as normal

Remote interpretation
Telehealth = Change/Innovation = Collaboration

GET BUY IN FROM YOUR TEAM!
LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT
PROVIDER/CLINICAL CHAMPIONS
COMMITTED WORKGROUPS
IT SUPPORT
4 Key Buckets...

**Broadband (Internet):** Do you have enough? What other processes are utilizing your broadband?

**Equipment:** What platforms are available to connect, what peripherals will you want/need?

**Program Development:** This is where you’ll spend the most time and effort as it is the most critical piece to a successful telehealth program. Are you prepared to make the appropriate commitments of staff and investment of time?

**Legal/Regulatory:** What does your state licensure allow? What are the rules of the road in terms of reimbursement? Are there federal implications?
Components For A Successful Program

**Care Coordination:**
- Scheduling
- Pre-Visit Requirements
- Concurrent Chart Review
- Coordinate with PCMH Team/Specialty Team
- Quality Assurance

**Quality Improvement Activities:**
- Data Collection
- Monitor and Report Outcomes
- Continuous Quality Improvements
- Regularly Evaluate Programs

**Case Conferencing:** to review registry and performance measures
- Providers
- Care Managers
- Patient Navigators

**Care Management:**
- Assess and address barriers to care
- Outreach
- Assist with navigating health care system
- Language/cultural interpretation
- Education
- Case management
FTCA/Gap Coverage

- All patients are already a patient of record (FTCA coverage does not apply to patients that are not established patients of record).

- For FTCA coverage applies only to INTERNAL telehealth patients (your organization is BOTH the distant AND originating site in this scenario).

- Gap coverage (wrap) is used to cover your organization for anything NOT covered by FTCA. HRSA is reviewing how FTCA would or would not apply to telehealth visits and are recommending that any Health Center engaging in telehealth services purchase gap coverage.

- If you have a specific scenario that you would like to verify is covered by FTCA, HRSA recommends that a call is made to the FTCA Hotline (877-464-4772). Please have detailed information regarding the scenario(s) that you have readily available. They will be able to advise you on whether FTCA coverage would be available for those scenarios. HRSA is encouraging all FQHCs that have questions around telehealth and FTCA to call the hotline. They are more than happy to work with you.
Strategic Planning

 ✓ Define Your Clinical Scope
 ✓ Look at Gaps in Services:
   ▪ Barriers to access care
   ▪ Lack of local providers
   ▪ Ongoing support for primary care provider
 ✓ Target Population
   ▪ Needs of specific populations
 ✓ Develop Work Group
   ▪ Define Goals
Staff Preparation

Pre-employment Interviews  
Onboarding of staff  
Trainings  
  - Mock Visits – especially worst-case scenario  
  - Working from home  
  - Tutorials  
  - Helpful Guides  
    - Color Coordination of Cables  
    - Marking of Ethernet Jacks  

Everyday use of equipment
Patient Preparedness

HIPAA Concerns

- Use of a headset
- Back to the wall
- Creating rules around the visit

Less is more:

- Minimize the movement of the smart phone/tablet/computer
- No need to speak loudly

Patient feedback helps with improvement!
Room Setup

- How is the room going to be used?
- Acoustics
- Lighting
- Peripherals
- Blue background is best for all skin tones.
Billing: Best Practices

✔ Ensure that Providers and Billers understand coding with telehealth

✔ Offer continual trainings on telehealth billing

✔ Fully understand your State regulatory rules around telehealth and Medicare billing

✔ Include telehealth services in your provider and payer contracts
Innovate!

Use your equipment for multiple tasks!

- Patient Education
- Marketing
- Interpretation
- Digital Signage
- Collaborative Care
- Precepting
Cost Benefit Analysis for Telehealth

For Patients/Community:

**Increased:**
- Continuity of care
- Access to care
- Simultaneous communicate with PCP and Specialist
- Access to Language Services via video
- High patient satisfaction!

**Decreased:**
- Transportation issues/costs
- Lost work/unpaid time
- Emergency Dept. visits
- Time to treatment
- Stigma
Challenges to Telehealth Sustainability

• Lack of consistent telehealth reimbursement policies between Federal, State and private payers

• Difficulty in developing clinical and staff champions within the program, must see the benefits of the program for patients.

• Lack of State-supported Telemedicine Infrastructure

• Seamless integration of 3 Layers:
  □ 1 – Broadband,
  □ 2 – Platform & Equipment,
  □ 3 – Application and Program Development

• Legal Considerations
Remember...

- Don’t practice until you get it right. Practice until you can’t get it wrong.

- Telehealth is not about fancy equipment and technology. It's a tool used to improve access and enhance quality of care.

- Implementing telehealth is a process, not a destination.
Some Lessons Learned...

- The largest expense with telehealth technology is the initial investment in the equipment needed – **beware of consultants, as they are very eager to spend your money on things you may not need!**
- Conduct extensive due diligence about what is needed for a successful program (learn from others who have adopted telehealth programs or form a collaborative)
- Patients give high satisfaction scores for services via telehealth. They like to convenience and reduction of time spent in a waiting room.
- **Our patients are becoming more empowered consumers.** With higher out of pocket costs, patients will demand better quality, high value, convenient care and a good patient experience.
- In a value-based world, telehealth will be an important tool for improving quality and access to care.
- Don’t wait for reimbursement for telehealth to be in place…in a value-based world, it won’t matter.
- **TELEHEALTH WILL HELP FQHC’s REMAIN COMPETITIVE!**
Additional Resources:
Thank you!!

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