



The coronavirus pandemic has rapidly brought telehealth to the forefront of health care delivery. Seemingly overnight, long-standing barriers to telehealth adoption have fallen by the wayside. Consumer demand for telehealth services will only continue to grow, giving health care providers that are quick to react a golden opportunity to meet the needs of their patients at this critical time. Before we look at how to get started with telehealth, see how coronavirus has changed consumer behavior in just a matter of months.

BEFORE COVID-19



of consumers said they would use telehealth if given the option¹



of Americans had actually used telehealth services²



didn't have access to or were unaware of telehealth options³

DURING COVID-19

Percentage of healthcare appointments fulfilled by a telehealth option



increase in percentage of telehealth appointments from March 1 to March 30⁴

158%

nationwide increase in use of one telehealth app after the outbreak of coronavirus, from January to March⁵



\$500M

dedicated by Congress to helping clinicians expand telehealth services in March 2020⁶

4

Practical steps to quickly respond to telehealth demand



The trends are clear. The age of telehealth has arrived. If you have scrambled to pull a telehealth plan together to answer coronavirus needs and do not have a plan in place moving forward, here are 4 steps you can take to establish a long-term approach to creating a telehealth solution:

1

Identify specific use cases to target

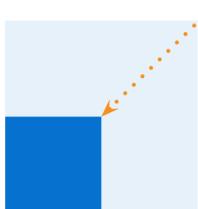
How you want to employ telehealth—monitoring remote patients, conducting mental health appointments or keeping tabs on elderly patients—will inform what technology solution you actually need. Knowing how you intend to use telehealth to better serve your patients is the first step toward implementing a solution.



2

Select the “smallest” possible solution

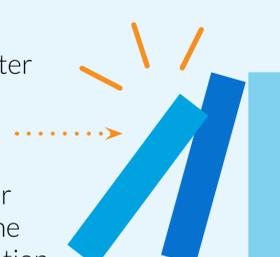
As with any new change, start small and act fast to reduce risk. Choose the simplest use case to begin. Starting small allows you to build on quick wins to align culture, behavior, and skills to support your implementation in a way that provides value to both patients and your own team members.



3

Understand the impact to your patients

A telehealth reimbursement model has been established to accommodate the needs of the pandemic, but the models are likely to change after the virus. Once your use cases are determined, figure out what the impact will be on your patients' billing. For example, if you are only doing video conferencing, then plan for how your reimbursement levels will be structured, what the appropriate billing coding is, and any documentation requirements needed to make sure there's no confusion once your solution is launched.



4

Gather organizational buy-in and support

Creating enthusiasm throughout your organization for rolling out a telehealth solution is key to the initiative's success. Regular communication of the benefits and the project's progress will help. Ensure that office staff are knowledgeable when scheduling appointments with patients to let them know telehealth is an option. If all levels of the organization are not on board, adoption will suffer.



If you don't have a sustainable telehealth solution in place today, it's imperative you begin now to respond more effectively to both everyday challenges and global issues like COVID-19. Building more agile, responsive care for your patients is critical to remaining relevant in today's evolving marketplace. From teleconferencing and diagnostic technologies to patient scheduling and logistics, Celerity can help you reduce costs, improve patient and physician safety, and implement sound, incremental changes that improve care and increase your impact on the community.

SOURCES

¹ American Well, *Telehealth Index: 2019 Consumer Survey*, 2019
^{2,3} J.D. Power, *One in 10 Americans Use Telehealth, But Nearly 75% Lack Awareness or Access*, J.D. Power Finds, July 2019
⁴ GlobalNewswire, *MTBC Practice Pulse Shows Telehealth Adoption Surging Amidst COVID-19 Crisis*, April 13, 2020

⁵ Khalid, *Telemedicine struggles to be an option for everyone in the wake of coronavirus*, March 20, 2020
⁶ Facher, *Trump lifts restrictions on telehealth services for seniors in hopes of limiting coronavirus spread*, March 17, 2020