

A close-up photograph of a silver stethoscope resting on a wooden desk. In the background, a laptop is visible, but it is out of focus. The entire image has a red color overlay.

HOW TELEMEDICINE CAN
**TRANSFORM
PATIENT
ENGAGEMENT**

Telemedicine is an attractive new care model—the growth potential is great, it’s easy to adopt, and so far patients are very happy with it. Telemedicine is proving to be an ideal format for improving patient engagement and is creating a greater demand for services. That’s strong incentive for private practices to embrace this new frontier of healthcare. Private practices that opt-in to this care model have the ability to improve both their clinical efficiency and the patient/provider relationship.

Rising healthcare costs and the government-mandated access to health care are driving consumers to telemedicine. The convenience, efficiency, and affordability of this care model are becoming appealing options for both patients and providers. The industry predicts that as patients become more proactive in their healthcare delivery choices, use of telehealth services will increase from an estimated 250,000 patients in 2013 to an estimated 3.2 million patients in 2018.¹ Recent surveys confirm that 74 percent of U.S. consumers would use telehealth services, 70 percent are comfortable communicating with healthcare providers online, and 80 percent have no qualms about submitting their medical information online.²

The growing number of patients who prefer the convenience of telemedicine is going to result in a greater demand for services—a strong incentive for private practices to embrace this new frontier of healthcare. This guide will show you how telemedicine is transforming patient engagement—improving access, convenience and the quality of care—for a better provider/patient experience.

Telemedicine gives patients better access to care

The American Association of Medical Colleges predicts that by 2025, there will be a shortage of somewhere between 46,000-90,000 primary care physicians.³ This shortage is going to have a profound effect on the entire healthcare system, but especially on those living in rural areas who are already underserved when it comes to receiving healthcare.

Telemedicine helps small practices expand their care to those living in rural communities and housebound patients who may not be able to drive themselves to appointments. It can also help them reach the elderly, patients who don’t have access to a car, or those who find it difficult to take time off from work. A recent study found telehealth services can be an entry point to the healthcare system for people who have difficulty accessing their regular physician, including employees who were unable to take time off work.⁴ Being able to offer telemedicine services to housebound, elderly, or rural patients can help you expand your practice reach and your profitability.



Patients enjoy the cost-effective convenience

With telemedicine, patients won't have to travel to your office, which is going to save both time and money. Patients won't have to shell out their hard-earned cash to pay for the gas it takes to drive to their doctor's offices. They also won't have to use any personal time off (PTO), precious time that they would rather use for vacations, attending school functions, or other more rewarding activities.

Another reason they love it: telemedicine may be covered by insurance at the same rate as in-person visits.

It's more effective for managing their chronic conditions

Nearly half of the adults in the United States are living with chronic conditions such as asthma, congestive heart failure, and diabetes. Several studies have confirmed that telemedicine can be a "useful tool" in reducing deaths, improving health outcomes and access to health care services, and reducing the health care costs for managing chronic conditions.⁵ Patients with diabetes require constant monitoring of their blood sugar levels. With new telemedicine technology, they can be remotely monitored and an alert can be sent to both the provider and the patient to promptly take action when dangerously low levels are detected.

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Faster time to care can result in faster time to diagnosis and treatment, improving health outcomes with less costly treatments. "Home telemonitoring of chronic disease seems to be a promising approach to patient management that produces accurate and reliable data, empowers patients, influences their attitudes and behaviors, and potentially improves their medical conditions."⁶ Effective management of chronic conditions is a powerful use of telemedicine that improves patient engagement and quality of life.



Consulting a specialist is easier

When patients need a referral to a specialist for treatment, it can disrupt the continuity of care or worse—those patients might not return. Telemedicine makes it easier to consult with specialists. Using a team approach via telemedicine doesn't require patients to ferry back and forth between providers. One healthcare professional quickly saw the value of telemedicine when it came to her referrals: "By bringing specialists to them, we keep patients in our facility, keeping the revenue here without the cost of actually having a specialist on-site."⁷ Recent data reflect that both primary care providers and patients are very satisfied with e-consultation capabilities of telemedicine. The reasons given for the high ratings were: "convenience, educational value, rapid turnaround, improved access to specialty input, better provider-provider communication, avoidance of unnecessary patient travel, and the perception of shorter waiting times for patients ultimately referred to face-to-face visits."⁸

Telemedicine offers a personalized patient experience

When the limitations of location are removed, patient experience improves. Patients are able to talk in an atmosphere where they are most comfortable—their own homes. The face-to-face communication of telemedicine promotes a greater feeling of personalized care. When patients have to travel to their doctor's office and sit in a waiting room full of patients, they can feel like they're just another number. Research indicates that patients have a very high level of satisfaction—over 90 percent—with the telemedicine experience they receive.

The growth in telemedicine is being fueled by the value it offers to patients. When patient engagement is improved with better access, more convenience, reduced costs, and greater levels of care, everybody wins. Private practices that take advantage of this new technology will enhance patient care, expand their practices, and improve their financial bottom line.



Including telemedicine in your practice

Starting a telemedicine program is easier than you think. “Practices who have invested in health information technology, especially electronic health record systems, have created the necessary technological infrastructure for telehealth services.” AdvancedMD—a medical office software company that offers billing software, practice management, electronic health records, and big data reporting—now offers telemedicine services.

AdvancedMD universal telemedicine solution acts like a virtual clinic enabling providers to see patients anytime from anywhere as long there is an Internet connection. It shortens the distance between patients and providers, essentially bringing back the house call by connecting clinicians directly to the people they need to see.

This convenient telemedicine platform improves private practices ability to offer healthcare services to patients who don't have easy access to care with simple, integrated technology. With AdvancedTelemedicine, clinicians can easily connect to patients regardless of geography.

Remote healthcare technology securely connects you to patients through a growing variety of applications and services including two-way video, secure electronic communications, and smartphone. The AdvancedMD telemedicine platform makes it easy to perform patient consultations via video conferencing, securely transmit still images, communicate via a patient portal and to remotely monitor vital signs.

AdvancedTelemedicine platform incorporates the same workflows that clinicians use everyday. This cloud-based software has no expensive equipment or hardware to install. It's easy to access and intuitive to use. It makes it easy to perform patient consultations via video conferencing, securely transmit still images, communicate via our patient portal, and remotely monitor vital signs.

Forward-thinking healthcare providers who offer telemedicine are going to reap the benefits of being able to see more patients, work more efficiently, and improve the quality of care. Learn how AdvancedTelemedicine can extend your practice reach and your patient satisfaction.

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