



Using Telemedicine in the time of COVID-19



Telemedicine has increasingly been in the news recently. It refers to the practice of caring for patients remotely when the provider and patient are not physically present with each other. Modern technology has enabled doctors to consult patients by using HIPAA compliant video-conferencing tools to care for acute issues, follow ups and counseling.

I have been practicing telemedicine for the last 4 years and am grateful we have this tool easily at our fingertips in this time of crisis, where we can use such new methods of healthcare to manage patient care and limit both patient and provider exposure to such a serious threat.

Latest news: “EXPANSION OF TELEHEALTH WITH 1135 WAIVER: Under this new waiver, Medicare can pay for office, hospital, and other visits furnished via telehealth across the country and including in patient’s places of residence starting March 6, 2020. A range of providers, such as doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists, and licensed clinical social workers, will be able to offer telehealth to their patients...The provider must use an interactive audio and video telecommunications system that permits real-time communication between the distant site and the patient at home.”

What does this mean? It means Medicare will reimburse physicians at the same rate of an office visit, for a televisit. They have also removed the need for HIPAA compliant telemedicine platform, so you can use your personal phone to facetime, whatsapp facetime, or skype with your patients. You would code using the same CPT codes, but add the place of service modifier 02. So please, do not risk your patient’s exposure, or your own, and implement these tools to manage your patients immediately.

While these particular waiver lifts are for Medicare specifically, many private insurance companies are following suit and offering similar reimbursements.

If you are looking for more established telemedicine platforms, a few companies are offering free trials of their platforms; doxy.me or bluestream health.

Many large telemedicine companies are overwhelmed with patients requesting telemedicine consults and could use your help. Currently, the license restrictions have been lifted nationwide, allowing you to see patients in states you are not licensed as well. For anyone who has additional time or interest, please reach out to Teladoc, American Well, or Doctor on Demand for opportunities to get involved.

Lastly, if anyone is interested in learning more about telemedicine, please enroll in this informative masterclass using the link below:

https://innovatehealth.teachable.com/?affcode=311503_plld3yoz

Please stay safe during this global pandemic. We are all united together in this fight. Follow the five and practice social distancing to help flatten the curve!



Stella Gandhi, MD
YPS President