

SUCCESSFULLY

NAVIGATING

WORKFLOW CHALLENGES

FOR SUCCESSFUL TELEMEDICINE



Let's travel back in time to 1997.

Bill Clinton has just begun his second term. Scottish scientists are touting the cloning of Dolly the sheep. And Titanic has taken the world by storm. Can you picture it?

Okay. Now suppose that someone told you in 1997 that in just a couple decades, you'd be able to treat patients via video on your phone or computer. The patient could be sitting in their kitchen, snacking on a Pop-Tart, while you diagnosed them from just about anywhere in the world you happened to be. These virtual appointments would be done through lightning-fast connections and with little to no overhead cost.

This miraculous scenario might've sounded surreal at the time, but you probably would've jumped at the chance to expedite care, save money, and simplify your patients' lives (not to mention your own).

The future is now.

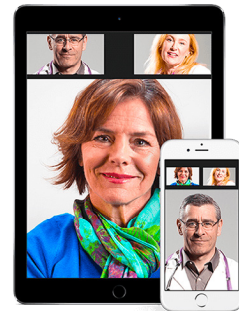
Telemedicine is here and practices nationwide are using it as a way to reduce healthcare costs and overhead expenses. According to industry statistics, the use of telehealth will increase from an estimated 250,000 patients in 2013 to an estimated 3.2 million in 2018.¹ And by the year 2020, telemedicine is forecasted to be worth more than \$30 billion globally.²



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This rise in telemedicine is great news to patients. In our increasingly technology-driven world, 70% of patients feel comfortable communicating with healthcare providers online and 80% are fine with submitting personal medical information online.³ And surveys show that 80% of patients between the ages of 18-34 actually prefer virtual consultations to meeting their providers face-to-face.⁴

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In fact, patients not only want telemedicine—they often demand the convenience and accessibility it offers. Telemedicine delivers faster time to diagnosis and treatment, which results in better health outcomes and happier patients. And if you can't provide those things, expect patients to look elsewhere.

“Fewer patients, particularly those younger than age 60, are loyal to one practice,” says Nancy Gagliano, M.D., chief medical officer for Culbert Healthcare Solutions. “Instead, many patients would readily seek care elsewhere if it meant a same-day appointment or a shorter wait time. This expectation of care-on-demand is driving the growth of telehealth.”⁵

Telemedicine is now up to the challenge.

While telemedicine software has always promised increased convenience, it has had its share of kinks to work out along the way. The past several years have been a learning process for both the creators of telehealth products and the healthcare professionals who use them.

The good news is that modern telehealth software is lightyears better than the earlier versions. That being said, even the best software requires effort to implement. Here are a few of the common challenges that practices face while implementing telemedicine software... as well as some solutions.

1. Difficulty understanding and using the technology.

There are certainly telemedicine products on the market that are cumbersome and hard to use. That's why it's essential to choose a highly-rated version like AdvancedTelemedicine. With the best telemedicine software, the only thing you need to get started is a computer with a webcam or a Smartphone. The software does all the heavy lifting.

Of course, you'll need to get comfortable with the software interface, so you can focus on your patients during consultations and not worry about technical things like how to zoom the camera. A great way to accomplish this is to use it for already scheduled things at your practice like team meetings. That way you can acclimate to the experience within the friendly confines of your office and amongst your staff.

While the telemedicine software itself may not be very daunting, integrating it with your EHR and practice management systems can be. In some cases, they won't be compatible. This is a problem because it complicates the process and forces you to use multiple monitor windows during your virtual consultations.



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The remedy is to ensure that your telemedicine software is not only compatible with your other practice software, but perfectly harmonious. Do your due diligence and find an option that is user-friendly, as well as compatible with everything else your practice is doing.

For example, AdvancedTelemedicine makes it easier than ever to add session notes to your patients' charts. The software allows you to capture video screenshots and then automatically adds your notes to the patient chart for you. It also relieves billing and claims headaches, generates copy charges and claims for each visit, and gives you a central location for appointment management and scheduling.

2. Strong demand from patients.

As mentioned earlier, the vast majority of patients want telemedicine options.⁶ This comes as no surprise. Modern consumers have moved so many of our transactions online that it's second nature for many people. And while it's particularly true for Millennials, it also applies to those who aren't digital natives. According to research, nearly half of patients 45 and older would be willing to do a virtual consultation.⁷

With patients of all ages desiring the convenience and efficiency offered by telemedicine, the demand is booming. Fortunately, the right telemedicine solution can streamline your processes and boost your efficiency. Rather than being overwhelmed by the pressure, you can treat more patients and increase the reach of your practice without overhead costs.

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One final benefit of telemedicine is the reduction of cancellations and no-shows. When factors like weather and traffic are removed from the equation, patients are much more likely to make their appointments.⁸ This helps reduce no-shows, balance your schedule and treat patients more consistently and efficiently.

3. Incorporating it into your workflow

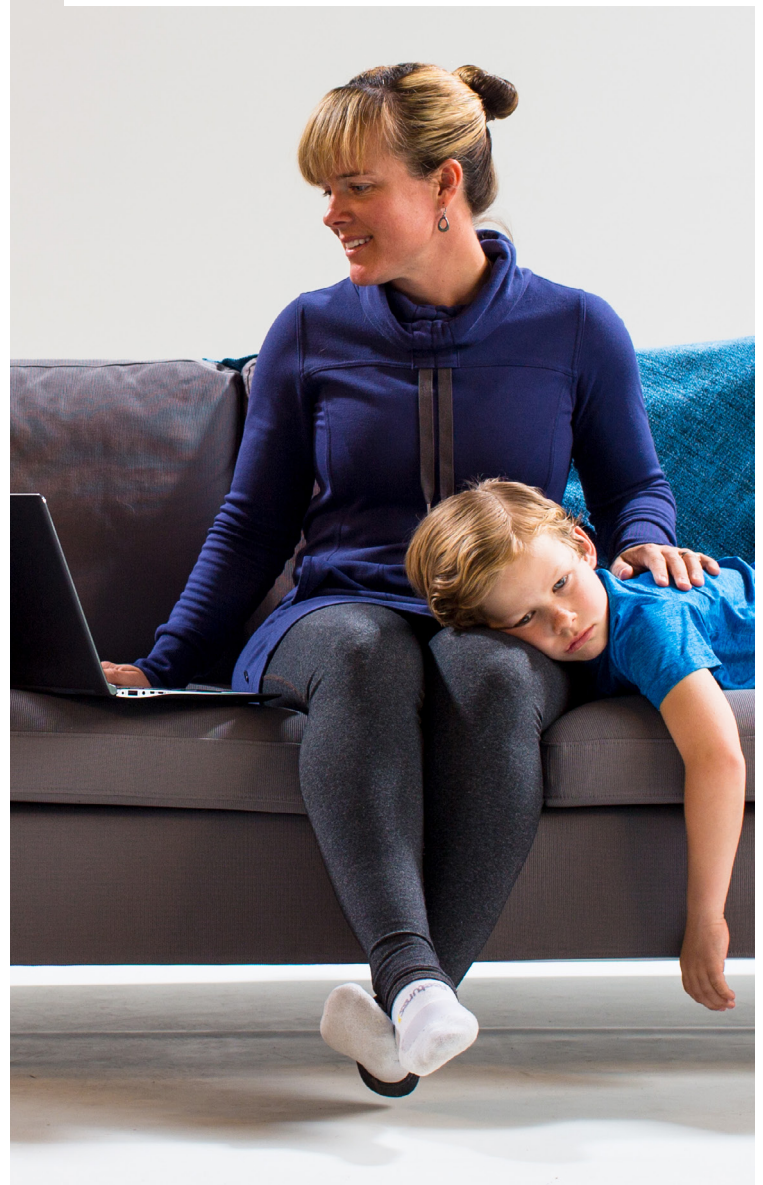
Your patients want you to provide telemedicine, but how will that impact your current processes and workflow? And if your practice is already meeting its patient capacity, how do you carve out time for virtual consultations? These are all valid questions.

Some practices start out by designating one provider for all the telemedicine consults. But this approach usually isn't practical, so you'll need to find a way to balance in-office visits with previously-scheduled telemedicine visits. Doing so requires your office staff to all be on the same page.

It's also crucial for your office software to work together. Despite the benefits of an integrated system, some medical practices choose to go with an "a la carte" approach. While the individual products they purchase may be high quality, the lack of integration seriously reduces workflow efficiency and can prevent patient communication automation. As a result, this approach often leads to frustrating logjams and obstacles.

The best news is that when you get a top-of-the-line telemedicine product, it can easily be integrated with the rest of your office software. This all-in-one approach will streamline everything from charting to billing. As a result, workflow becomes smoother than ever.

When integrated with your office software, the return on investment from telemedicine is significant enough that Becker's Hospital Review proclaims that the "cost benefits of telehealth can't be ignored."





Conclusion

Telemedicine really is a win-win situation for your practice. Your patients will get better service to go along with the convenience they crave. You get the freedom and versatility that comes from virtual consultations. If there's a cherry on top, it's the cost savings that come from appointments without overhead expenses.

While the only components you need to get started are a computer and webcam, you'll need to start preparing a strategy now if you want to get the most from your telemedicine investment. By planning ahead to integrate your office software, you'll experience the cost-savings, convenience and efficiency that have made telemedicine one of the hottest new trends in healthcare.

Contact us today to learn more about how telemedicine integrated into your complete office workflow and software can benefit your practice.

¹ American Hospital Association. "The Promise of Telehealth for Hospitals, Health Systems and Their Communities." Trend Watch. January 2015. P. 6.

² Mordor Intelligence. "Global Telemedicine Market: Growth, Trends, and Forecasts (2015-2020)". August 2015.

³ Insight Express. "Cisco Customer Experience Report for Healthcare." February 2013.

⁴ Mordor Intelligence. "Global Telemedicine Market: Growth, Trends, and Forecasts (2015-2020)". August 2015.

⁵ "Five Market Trends Affecting Telehealth Adoption." Physicians Practice. April 07, 2017. <http://www.physicianspractice.com/blog/five-market-trends-affecting-telehealth-adoption>

⁶ Insight Express. "Cisco Customer Experience Report for Healthcare." February 2013.

⁷ PwC's Health Research Institute. "Top Health Industry Issues of 2016: Thriving in the New Health Economy." December 2015. P. 7.

⁸ Guest, D.K. et al. "Telemedicine versus Face-to-Face Patient Care: A Comparison of Treatment Avoidance in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Patients." Presented at Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Service National Meeting. February 2011.

<http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/meetings/2011/abstract-display.cfm?RecordID=65>