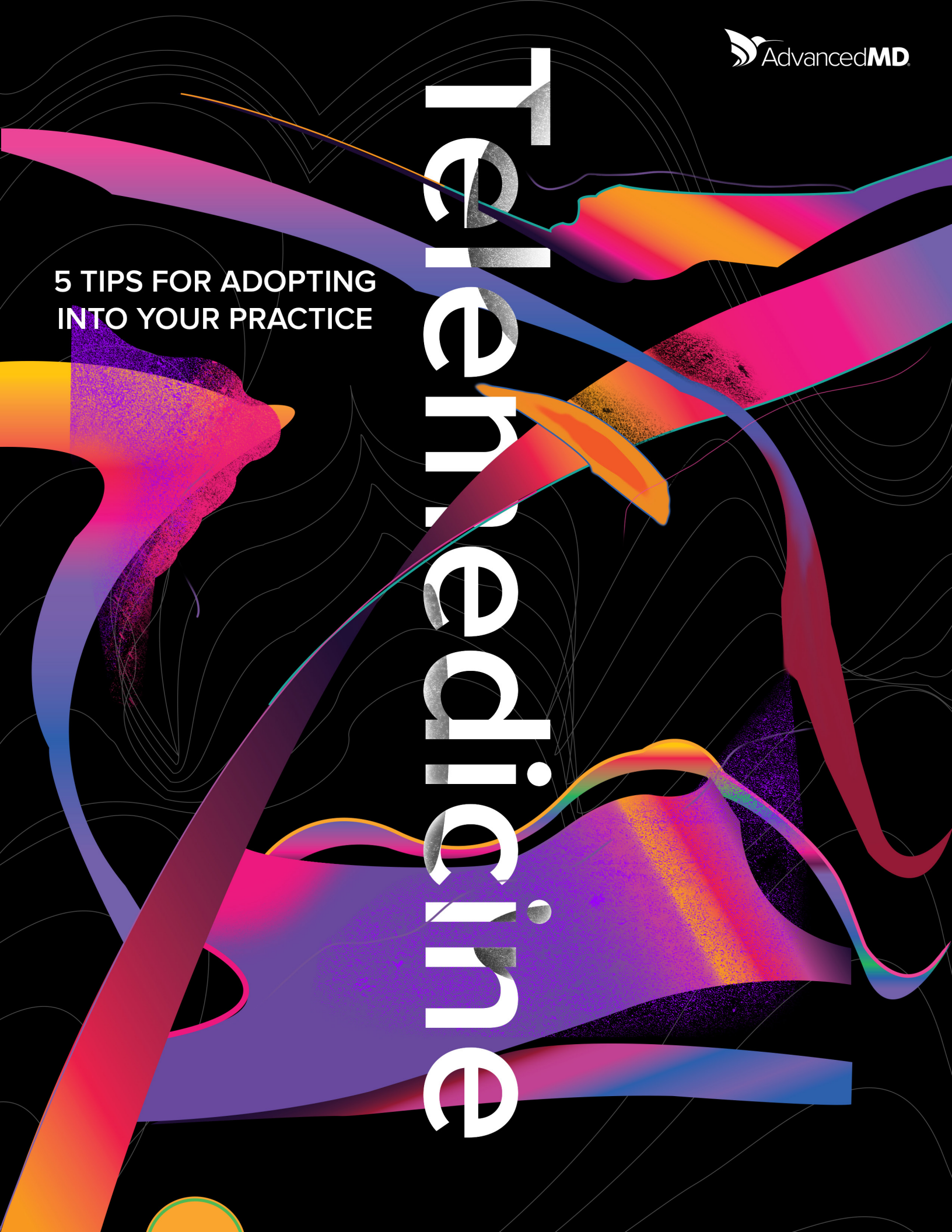



Telemedicine

5 TIPS FOR ADOPTING
INTO YOUR PRACTICE





Telemedicine is definitely here to stay. That's good for both patients & physicians.

An increasing number of practices across the country are turning to telemedicine as a way to combat inflating healthcare costs, rising overhead expenses and government-mandated access to healthcare. Industry statistics suggest the use of telehealth will increase from an estimated 250,000 patients in 2013 to an estimated 3.2 million in 2018.¹ By the year 2020, telemedicine vis actually forecasted to be worth \$34 billion globally.²

As digital medicine expert Eric Topol put it, "Medicine is about to go through its biggest shakeup in history."³

Don't worry, your patients will happily get on board. Surveys reveal that 70% of patients feel comfortable communicating with healthcare providers online. Even more importantly, 80% were fine with submitting personal medical information online.⁴

This shouldn't be surprising. Our society has moved so many of our transactions online that it's second nature for many people. This is particularly true for Millennials. One study showed that 80% of patients between the ages of 18-34 actually preferred consultations on their mobile device over face-to-face meetings.⁵

And what about more "seasoned" patients? Those who were born long before technology became ubiquitous. According to PwC's Health Research Institute, 43% of patients 45 and older would be willing to do a virtual consultation.⁶

So it seems that everyone from digital natives to digital immigrants are supportive of, or even clamoring for, telehealth. You've probably heard the phrase "strike while the iron's hot." Well, this is definitely one of those times. Here are five tips to help streamline the process as you adopt telemedicine software into your practice.



Approach your telemedicine decisions from the patient perspective.

Plain and simple, the move to telemedicine is good for business. As you prepare for it, think about what patients most appreciate about the technology. The more you can meet their unique needs, the more competitive and profitable you'll be.

Among the main benefits telemedicine offers are convenience and accessibility. While these apply to all patients, they're particularly relevant for rural, housebound, or elderly patients with limited mobility. Telemedicine delivers faster time to diagnosis and treatment, which results in better health outcomes and happier patients.

It's not surprising that patients consistently give high marks for their telemedicine consultations.⁷ They can get quality care without dealing with traffic and waiting rooms. Geography is irrelevant as long as patients have a secure Internet connection.

As Becker's Hospital Review reports, "the cost benefits of telehealth can't be ignored."⁸

With two-way HD video, telehealth solutions like AdvancedTelemedicine allow for consultations that feel personal & collaborative.

Do your due diligence.

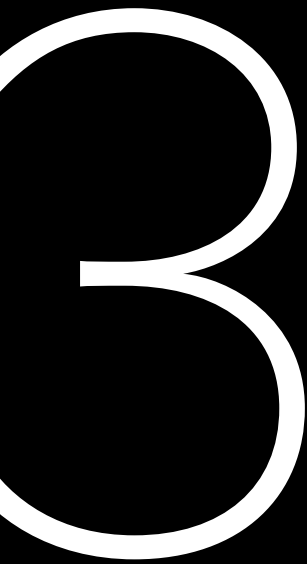
Just as not every prescription drug is high quality, there's a wide range of efficacy when it comes to telemedicine.

When done right, the technology can save you time and money. It can integrate with your other office software and streamline all of your processes.

The goal should be finding the optimal telemedicine solution for your practice.

Needless to say, it's a way bigger choice than whether to buy Crocs or Danskos.

As part of your research, consider how you'll be using the technology. While the patient's experience is crucial, so is yours. What features in particular will make your life easier? How will they mesh with your practice?



Take full advantage of the financial benefits.

By increasing your productivity and allowing more time to focus on increasing your billable encounters, telemedicine offers another revenue stream for physicians. Your after-hours calls can become virtual telemedicine visits so you can bill for your time. You can treat more patients and increase the reach of your practice without overhead costs.

Additionally, you can retain more revenue by offering in-house specialist consults. You won't need to refer patients who need specialists to other practices. Instead, use telemedicine to bring the specialists to your patients.

One final benefit 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. One study from the VA showed a definite increase in patients keeping appointments when they were done virtually instead of in the office.⁹



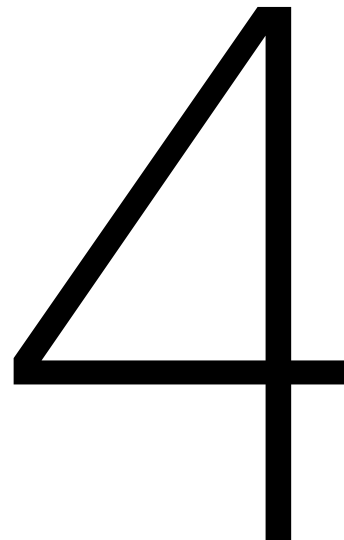
Make it an “all-hands-on-deck” operation.

Anytime you're changing processes for your practice, it's important to have the buy-in of your staff. Without support from all sides, it's difficult to fully leverage the power of technology like telemedicine.

Include your staff early in the software selection process and solicit their opinions. While the choice may ultimately be yours, this lets them know their voice matters. By deputizing your staff from the beginning, you'll be setting yourself up for long-term success.

Never underestimate the tech-savviness of your staff. Even the most elderly receptionists already use teleconferencing software like Skype to chat with kids & grandchildren.

And if you're thinking your staff might not be tech-savvy enough for telemedicine software, think again. Technology is infused with our modern world and they spend their days effortlessly doing things like downloading apps and uploading photos on their mobile devices. So it's not uncommon for new telemedicine technology to be successfully integrated within a couple days. Sure, there will be snags here and there, but you'll start seeing benefits faster when the whole team is involved.



Make training a priority.

There's no doubt that telemedicine is user-friendly. But it's still a big deal when your practice implements new software. So don't rest on your laurels and assume it'll simply take care of itself. Training is essential for everyone involved.

We all need a hero from time to time. Choose a training champion for your office & put them in charge of gathering the best training materials and sharing them with the team.

You'll need to be comfortable with the software interface, so you can focus on the patient during consultations and not on technical things like how to zoom the camera. One simple way to get familiar with the software is to use the equipment for already-scheduled things like team meetings. That way your staff can experience the software from a patient's perspective.

If the prospect of training seems daunting, this may be a good time to remind you about how simple telemedicine can be. You only need a computer with a webcam. That's all. You can let the software do the heavy lifting while you focus on what you do best: treat patients.

Conclusion

In the immortal words of Roger Maris, "You hit home runs not by chance, but by preparation." To smoothly adopt it into your practice, you need to prepare a strategy. And the best way to follow through on it is to get support from your entire team.

Rest assured, the best telemedicine software is incredibly intuitive. For example, AdvancedTelemedicine has a simple interface that requires no learning curve. If your staff members can play Angry Birds, they can handle it. And all you'll need for your virtual consultations is a computer with a webcam and an Internet connection.

The telemedicine train is leaving the station, so make sure you're on it. The benefits are simply too lucrative to pass up. Once you've adopted telemedicine into your practice and integrated it with your other healthcare technology, you'll see just how easy it is to have no overhead costs while still over-delivering to your patients. Find out how.

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 How Technology Is Transforming Health Care. July 12, 2013.

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/hospital-of-tomorrow/articles/2013/07/12/how-technology-is-transforming-health-care>

⁴ Insight Express. "Cisco Customer Experience Report for Healthcare." February 2013.

⁵ Mordor Intelligence. "Global Telemedicine Market: Growth, Trends, and Forecasts (2015-2020)". August 2015.

⁶ PwC's Health Research Institute. "Top Health Industry Issues of 2016: Thriving in the New Health Economy." December 2015. P.7.

⁷ Richardson, Lisa K. et al. "Current Directions in Videoconferencing Tele-Mental Health Research." Clinical Psychology: a Publication of the Division of Clinical Psychology of the American Psychological Association 16(3), 2009.

<http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2850.2009.01170.x>

⁸ 10 Biggest Technological Advancements for Healthcare in the Last Decade. January 28, 2014.

<http://www.beckershospitalreview.com/healthcare-information-technology/10-biggest-technological-advancements-for-healthcare-in-the-last-decade.html>

⁹ 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>