

HOW TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY FOR YOUR TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM

DEVELOPED BY AMD GLOBAL TELEMEDICINE, INC.

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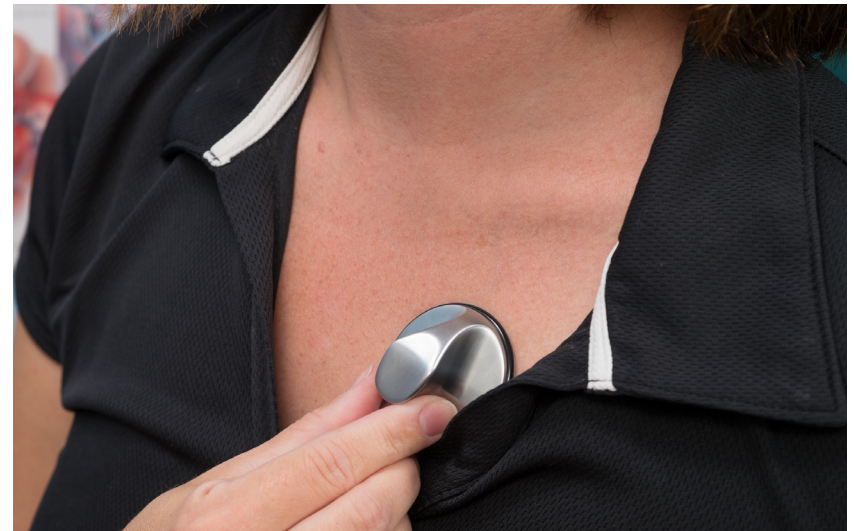


INTRODUCTION:

Adopting new IT solutions and technologies such as telemedicine is a way for healthcare providers to improve patient outcomes and continue to provide value-based care. Telemedicine platforms give physicians the tools to expand beyond geographic proximity to deliver care to people who otherwise may not be able to find treatment.

Though some administrators may be hesitant to integrate new devices or policies into their practices, the industry is changing at a rapid pace, and staying ahead of the curve on the most pertinent and powerful new technologies and best practices is a way to retain patients as well as attract new business and partnerships. By being methodical and mindful about how your facility brings telemedicine into everyday use, it can be possible to avoid any potential hiccups or speed bumps.

Once your program is online, the ultimate goal is to integrate telemedicine into your practice in a way that it is sustainable and reliable. Again, this may take time, but by investing the resources into making sure your entire team is on the same page, you can leverage telemedicine to improve patient outcomes, attract new business and make your daily workflow more efficient.



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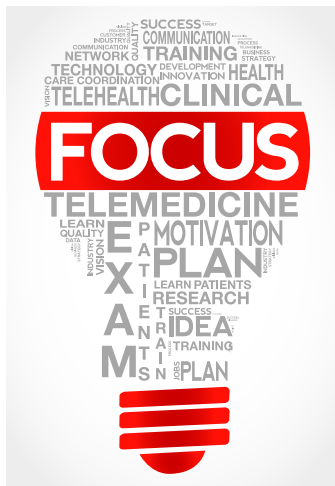
DID YOU KNOW?

According to the American Telemedicine Association (ATA), more than half of all hospitals in the U.S. now use some type of telemedicine

PART I: FOCUS

Telemedicine programs have incredible potential for all parts of your practice, but a small, concerted integration plan is the best way to make sure your administrative team, medical professionals and support staff are comfortable with the new technology.

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DEVELOP A PLAN

Nail down the best workflow for your providers and staff. Establish the best way for your practice to include telemedicine into day-to-day operations, and work with your senior employees and administrators to decide what departments and individuals can be most helpful.

It is best to select one or two specialties that will benefit from the addition of telemedicine technologies and begin to establish familiarity before integrating it into your practice more fully. Overall, be sure to make choices that are reasonable without compromising the rest of your business.

This may also include:

- Coordinating new policies and responsibilities.
- Maximizing efficiency by creating new channels of communication.
- Creating a clear and robust order of operations and expectations.

Work with a well-respected staff member to help lead by example. Find an individual who has seen the positive outcome and success with your telemedicine program or other technology integrations, and as a team, demonstrate best practices and advantages associated with the new technology. This person will serve as your champion of telemedicine.



Anticipate any pitfalls or kinks based on previous experiences. Your practice may have recently adopted other new IT platforms or policies. The process of adopting EHR software, for example, may have exposed areas in your practice that will need close monitoring during the telemedicine roll-out.

Before integrating the new program, be sure to:

- Ask your staff about any concerns they may have about how it may affect daily routines or any other issues.
- Highlight departments or individuals that may need more support.
- Encourage your team by showing them real use case examples of what other healthcare organizations have achieved with the use of telemedicine.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some experts believe that the widespread adoption of telehealth could result in \$6 billion a year in savings.



PART II: TRAINING & SUPPORT

As your organization continues to leverage telemedicine technologies, you want to ensure everyone is on the same page. So work with your staff to determine the necessary resources and support that will make them feel successful. Not only can your internal IT professionals and experienced administrators help you along the way, but your telemedicine vendor also offers tools, training and best practices that can help with concerns you or your team may have along the way.

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WORK WITH YOUR TELEMEDICINE VENDOR

The training and support provided directly by your telemedicine partner has tremendous value. They have seen the industry evolve and experienced first-hand any possible difficulties. They know what it takes to ensure that telemedicine programs are successful. Remember, telemedicine technology is not just another IT platform, but a tool to deliver medical care.

Working closely with your telemedicine vendor to identify key training areas for your team members can help make the transition easy and it will instill confidence in your clinical and IT staff as you move forward with your telemedicine integration.

TRAIN EVERYONE INVOLVED

Make sure everyone from the IT department staff to doctors, clinicians and administrators are adequately prepared and comfortable with this new technology. Take the time to ensure everyone is on the same page, and the proper channels of communication and support systems are in place. Without enabling proper connectivity and IT resources, the foundation of this new platform may be vulnerable. Your own IT department should become proficient at using the new software or equipment and understanding how the system works as this will ensure you have an internal point of contact for any basic issues. Sustainability requires a strong infrastructure and the right internal know-how.

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SUPPORT CLINICAL STAFF AND REMOTE PROVIDERS

Telemedicine technology is designed with users in mind, but for any new or partnering staff member, it is important to cover the basics and provide necessary support.

Having clinicians that are comfortable using the software will improve your patients' experience and make the digital communication feel all the more personal. A well-trained clinical staff will also improve your practice's overall capabilities.

MINIMIZE FRUSTRATION WITH PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Without proper training and an understanding of the support systems in place, your staff may become frustrated or feel resentful of your telemedicine program. Communicate clearly the framework and infrastructure surrounding the program and encourage questions and feedback from your team. By laying out strong and rigid internal policies and expertise, you can help your practice prepare for the expansion of telemedicine capabilities and ensure that this new aspect of your treatment offerings is sustainable.

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DID YOU KNOW?

In urban areas, there are 134 medical specialists for every 100,000 people. In rural areas of the country, that number is just 40 specialists for the same number of patients.

PART III: REGROUP, STANDARDIZE & EXPAND

After you and your staff have developed familiarity and a rhythm with your telemedicine devices and policies, you can begin to look for new areas of your practice that may benefit from these technologies.

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Once again, it is important to be methodical and thoughtful about the best way to support your staff during this process, but overall, this will likely be a less dramatic step because you will have tangible experience to draw from. Take the knowledge you have gained to amend the initial adoption guidelines to better fit your practice, and employ your expertise to make expansion as smooth and as successful as possible.

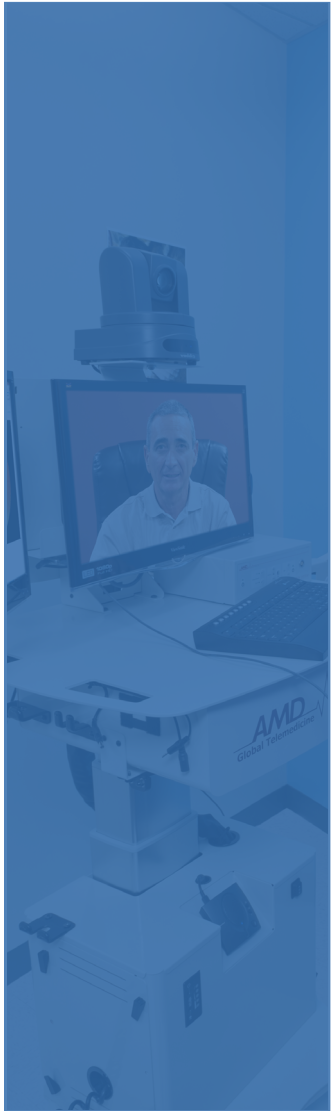
REFLECT AND REGROUP

At this point your team has seen a successful telemedicine roll-out in one or two areas of your organization, and you have been able to improve efficiency with digital patient consultants. In the same way that you may have had to refine your workflow processes to make this integration successful, it is worth considering the implications of expanding your telemedicine to other specialties.

Set analytics-based goals and realistic targets associated with growth and cost-reduction. Using your previous experience, establish a timeline with certain benchmarks.

Bring back your telemedicine champion and other individuals that may be helpful and reflect on any changes that may be needed before expanding telemedicine to other parts of your practice. Meet with the doctors or important staff members from areas that you are interested in adopting telemedicine use, and make sure everyone is on the same page before moving forward.

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SET STANDARDS

Once you have reflected and regrouped, develop a set of rules and guidelines for implementing telemedicine use in new areas.

Set standards to identify the right equipment and support necessary for each medical specialty or service before expansion. This will make the transition smooth and as easy as possible.

Be mindful of what brought about your initial success, and clearly highlight the types of improvements to areas like communication and productivity.

EXPAND YOUR TELEMEDICINE USE

The most successful use of telemedicine programs are the ones that are able to apply telemedicine to multiple treatment areas and expand their organization's service offerings to more places. Once you have successfully deployed your telemedicine program and worked out any kinks along the way, you can easily start to leverage the technology to offer additional specialties and improve the quality of care provided.

Select an area of your practice that may benefit from the use of telemedicine. Be sure this department is organized enough to integrate new infrastructure and policies.

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BUILD NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Working with other healthcare providers or clinics is important for expanding your business and extending the services your practice can offer. This is important if grants and other forms of funding for your business are finite or contingent on certain levels of growth or other metrics.

Organizations that perform well partner with smaller clinics, organizations or providers to offer new services and expand coverage. These relationships are cost-effective, and both parties benefit from shared resources and access to new information or tools.

Partnering with clinics and other small facilities is also important for extending treatment to patients in rural or remote locations. Your practice is likely working to integrate value-based care plans, and using telemedicine alongside new business relationships is important for increasing your potential and access to new patients.

By working with other community organizations and other associations, you can expand the reach of your telemedicine program. Overall, this can increase your practice's standing in an area, create new business and improve patient outcomes, all of which are important for developing a sustainable telemedicine program.

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DID YOU KNOW?

According to Jonathan Linkous, CEO of the American Telemedicine Association, “There are about 200 telemedicine networks connecting large health centers to about 3,000 largely rural sites for specialty consultations, continuing medical education and other services.”

PART IV: INTEROPERABILITY

Your telemedicine program will only achieve its maximum potential if it is fully integrated into your organization’s existing IT infrastructure. Making sure the technology is interoperable within your network and between partnering facilities is critical for ensuring patient information can be accessed in a secure, compliant and efficient manner.

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BE SURE TO SELECT THE TECHNOLOGIES THAT FITS YOUR SPECIFIC NEEDS

Use telemedicine products and technologies that can be easily integrated with your existing workflow and follow standards-based guidelines for transferring or transmitting data - such as HL7 integration.

Telemedicine is a tool that promotes efficiency and better patient outcomes. Simply offering digital communication without ensuring it will have a positive impact on your business and make treatment easier for your staff can be a costly mistake. Only invest in telemedicine programs that will be smoothly and securely integrated alongside your other IT initiatives.

PRIORITIZE COMMUNICATION

It is critical for medical technologies and software used for telemedicine to be fully interoperable in order to exchange information and interpret shared data seamlessly. Otherwise, physicians and administrators will be required to jump between digital platforms to access important patient information. This can slow your practice down and make it harder to ensure critical data is neither lost or misinterpreted.

Consult your in-house IT department about any challenges that exist internally. Also reach out to any tech partners you have.

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