



# Telehealth Vendor Evaluation, Selection, & Contracting

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# Objective

Successfully navigate the process of evaluating potential telehealth vendors and choosing the vendor that will have shared goals and support the long-term sustainability of your telehealth program.

# Agenda

- Background on and introduction to the Digital Health Implementation Playbook Series including the Telehealth Implementation Playbook
- Why telehealth vendor evaluation, selection, & contracting is important even if you already use telehealth in practice
- Best practices and key considerations for telehealth vendor evaluation, selection, & contracting
- Additional AMA resources

# Background

AMA Digital Health Research	Surfaced key requirements needed for physician adoption of digital solutions
Partners Connected Health Research	Identified the lack of learnings being shared related to successfully adopting/implementing solutions in practice
AMA Provider Adoption Summit	Externally validated and identified the need for a best practices “Playbook” <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• e.g. Caremore, UMMC, Partners Connected Health, Omada, MCHT</li></ul>
Creating Solutions	Developed the AMA Digital Health Implementation Playbook <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Surfacing case studies and best practices from over 160 physicians, care team members, health care administrators, and digital health thought leaders</i></li><li>• <i>Initial focus implementing remote monitoring solutions and telehealth</i></li></ul>

# Introduction to the Digital Health Implementation Playbook Series

New technologies are fundamentally changing the way people interact with health care. Despite the increasing prevalence of digital health, health system leaders struggle to drive innovation.

This playbook series is an effort to provide a roadmap for implementing digital health solutions based on widespread access to institutional knowledge and best practices currently held by experts in the field. The digital health solutions addressed in the Playbook series so far are:

- Remote Patient Monitoring
- Telehealth

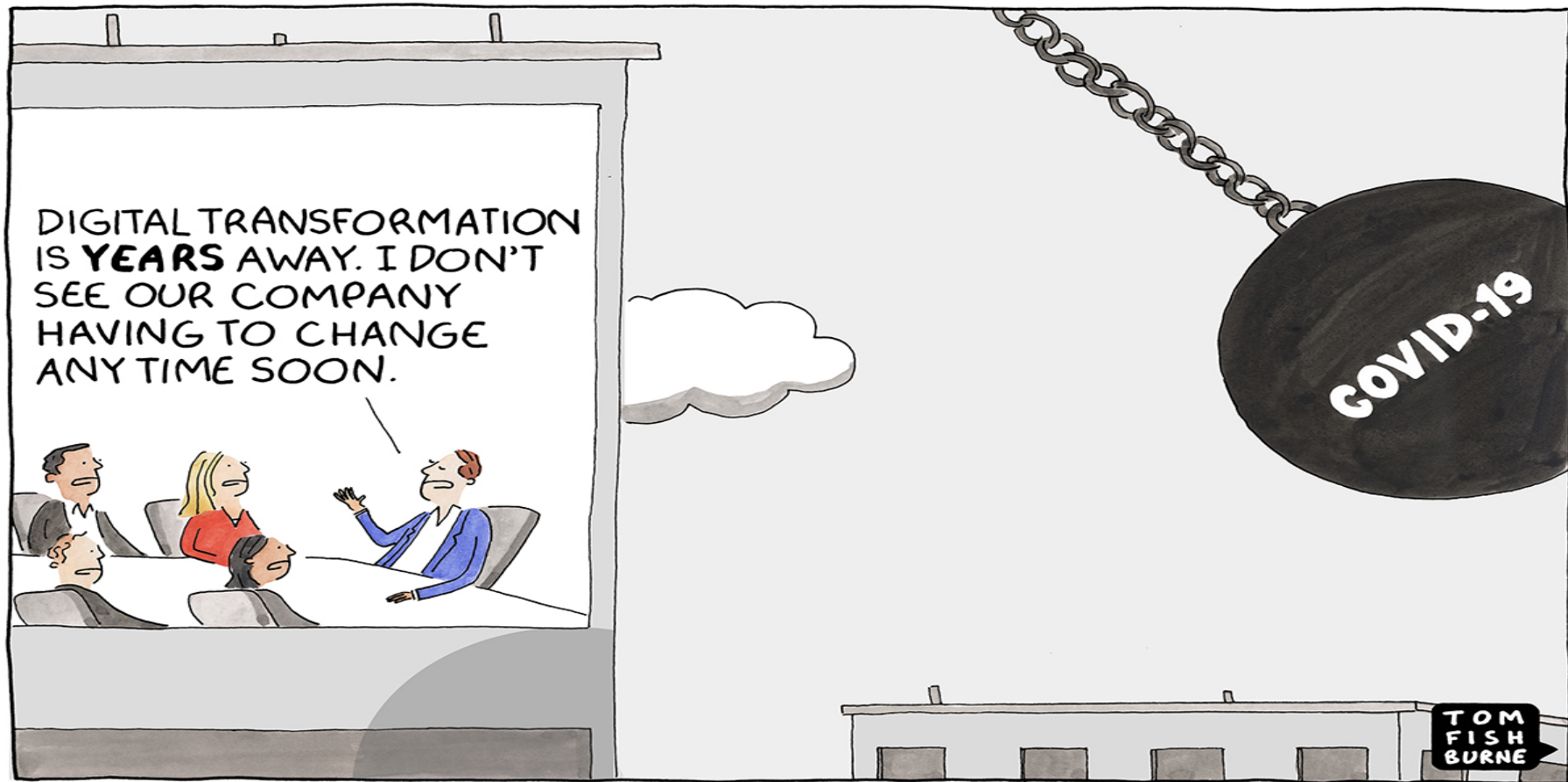


# The Path to Telehealth Implementation

The first six steps are **foundational to setting a telehealth implementation up for success.**

The subsequent six steps **focus on the specific and unique** considerations relevant to telehealth as it relates to how it will be operationalized in the clinical environment.





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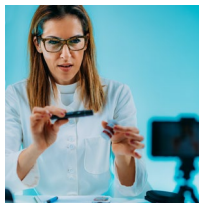
# COVID-19 has ushered in the age of telehealth



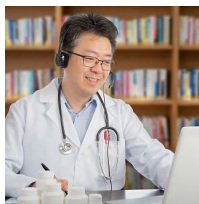
Remote and telehealth treatment has jumped, with over **90% of physicians now treating patients remotely.**



Telehealth tools are commonly used for remote treatment, with some **60% of coronavirus frontline healthcare workers and nearly all primary care physicians** report using telehealth for at least some of their patient care.



**Among physicians using telehealth** for consultation during the COVID-19 outbreak, **nearly half (48%)** are using it for the first time.



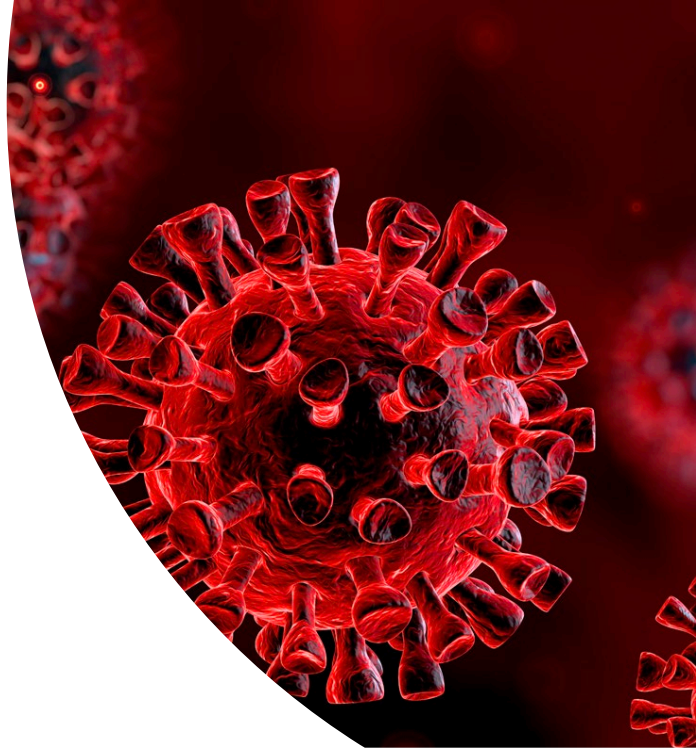
**One-fifth of physicians** using video conferencing and telehealth tools expect to use them significantly more than before when we lift physical distancing restrictions.



# The impact of COVID-19

With the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on access to medical care, telehealth has been a “go-to” way to facilitate care in an effort to keep physicians, care teams, and patients safe. The tools and guidelines being created now are already helping many to use telehealth and will continue to help define its role at this moment, and shape the future of physician practice.

- Expanded coverage and payment parity
- Regulatory changes
  - Lifting geographic restrictions
  - HIPAA enforcement discretion





So, why does this matter now?

## Here are a few good reasons...

- The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) may re-enforce its discretion to impose penalties for noncompliance with regulatory requirements under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- Align internally for streamlined workflows and technology integration.
  - Opportunity to evaluate what is and isn't working
- Plan for long-term, sustainable use.
  - Secure a vendor partnership that helps achieve your goals

# Evaluating telehealth vendors



- ✓ Develop evaluation criteria
- ✓ Schedule live or virtual demos
- ✓ Research vendors (even if existing)



- ✓ Have patients and care team members test products
- ✓ Gather experiential feedback for existing platforms



- ✓ Talk to colleagues and other organizations for feedback
- ✓ Ask vendors for case studies

# Vendor selection

## Selecting a vendor who is worthy of a long-term partnership ensures:

- An expert resource always on hand in challenging situations
- Support throughout the implementation process, from start to finish (and beyond)
- A partner who is equally motivated to achieve a successful outcome

<b>1. BUSINESS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organizational overview – tenure, funding source, financial stability, affiliations, notable customers, etc.</li><li>• Impact to program ROI—product cost, business model, reimbursement rates, risk sharing, support payment program participation, etc.</li><li>• Expertise in offering telehealth to your specialty</li><li>• Knowledge of federal and private payer requirements</li></ul>	<b>2. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to integrate with your current IT landscape, particularly your EHR system</li><li>• Cost, process, and timeline associated with integration and product updates</li><li>• Ability to capture data important to care team and patient<sup>20</sup></li><li>• Patient geolocation for licensure</li><li>• Customization capabilities</li><li>• Patient access to data</li><li>• Ability to maintain patient identity across platforms</li><li>• Biometrics/RPM integration capability</li><li>• Information blocking and interoperability requirements (as applicable)</li><li>• Impact analysis on your internet and local network usage</li></ul>	<b>3. SECURITY: (APPENDIX D.3)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supports compliance with HIPAA rules, such as willingness to sign a Business Associate Agreement (BAA)</li><li>• Third-party audits (SOC 2, HITRUST)</li><li>• Liability structure for managing potential security breaches</li><li>• User authentication and authorization</li><li>• Transparency on collected data use processes</li><li>• Local regulatory compliance (i.e., State Medical Board)</li><li>• In-platform consent capabilities</li></ul>
<b>4. USABILITY:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• User experience of platform for patients and care team members</li><li>• Patient and care team engagement metrics</li><li>• Dashboard/workflow assimilation</li><li>• Multi-specialty application</li><li>• Platform launch process and timing</li><li>• Ease of billing/payout for patients and health systems/practices</li></ul>	<b>5. CUSTOMER SERVICE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Level of support available to practice during and after implementation—staff training, patient education, project management, data analysis and insights, etc.</li><li>• What technology does the patient need and does the vendor support this?</li><li>• Degree of technical support available to patients</li><li>• Access to existing procedures and templates</li></ul>	<b>6. CLINICAL VALIDATION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documented clinical outcomes</li><li>• Published peer-reviewed research</li></ul>

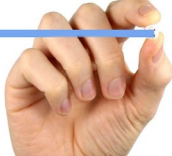
# Contracting

**A strong contract underpins a successful long-term relationship by providing:**

- Aligned expectations
- Written, agreed-upon terms to hold each party accountable
- Legal protection for physicians, patients, and vendors

# Best practices for contracting with vendors

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS



- ✓ Engage key team members (legal, financial, IT)
- ✓ Get the right documents executed
- ✓ Plan to scale

## GOALS



- ✓ What does success look like
- ✓ Timeline for implementation

## NEGOTIATE



- ✓ Financial terms
- ✓ Additional services
- ✓ Future upgrades



# Key agreements to know

## Legal Documents

- Business Associate Agreement
- Master Services Agreement
- Financial/Audit Reports
- Confidentiality Agreement/NDA

## Validation Documents

- IT Security and Risk Assessment
- Liability Insurance
- Medical Licenses for Practitioners



Prepare now for the future of  
telehealth.

# Additional AMA Resources on Telehealth

- [Telemedicine quick guide](#) has detailed information to support physicians and practices in expediting implementation of telemedicine.
- Digital Health Implementation Playbook Series
  - [Remote Patient Monitoring Playbook](#)
  - [Telehealth Implementation Playbook](#)
- [AMA Steps Forward Telemedicine module](#)
- AMA and AHA [cybersecurity resource](#) to help physicians working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic
- [Physician Innovation Network](#)
- [AMA Digital Health Research](#)

The following additional AMA resources are available to support your physicians and staff during COVID-19:

- Caring for Caregivers during COVID-19
- AMA COVID-19 Resource Page for Physicians
- JAMA COVID-19 Collection

**[www.ama-assn.org](http://www.ama-assn.org)**

# Upcoming Webinars

October 29	Telehealth and Team-based Care: How to Best Engage Support Staff to Successfully Implement TBC in Telemedicine James Jerzak, MD
November 10	How to Implement a Peer support Program During a Crisis Jo Shapiro, MD
November 12	Keeping Your Practice Open During COVID-19 Carol Vargo, MHS
December 2	Managing Mental Health During COVID-19 Christopher Botts
December 3	Organizational Culture and Physician Well-being Kevin Taylor, MD
December 9	Practical Practices: Behavioral Health Integration Kathleen Blake, MD, MPH

For questions, please email  
[Action.Labs@ama-assn.org](mailto:Action.Labs@ama-assn.org)

# Question & Answer

Thank you for participating in this AMA webinar!

The moderator will now facilitate the Q&A portion of the event.



