Telehealth Initiatives

Telehealth has the potential to enhance the quality of care, reduce costs, increase access, and improve the patient, physician, and care team experience. The evolution of telehealth from its nascent expansion during the COVID-19 pandemic will depend on many facets including measurement, shared learnings, technology advancements, research insights, and regulatory and payor support.

Since the peak of the pandemic, telehealth has stabilized at 38x pre-pandemic use[1], and with nearly 2 years of telehealth experience, many physicians and patients continue to express interest in delivering or receiving care via telehealth, recognizing the many benefits and potential opportunities[2]. Interest remains high, but there is a need to now focus on long term optimization of telehealth through research and technology advancements, particularly as the regulatory environment continues to evolve. **To help advance the use of telehealth, and support physicians, care teams, practices, and health systems as they navigate a rapidly evolving environment, the AMA offers the following initiatives and resources.**

Telehealth Immersion Program

The Telehealth Immersion Program, part of the AMA STEPS Forward™ Innovation Academy, is a series of curated webinars, peer-to-peer learning sessions, virtual discussions, bootcamps, and on-demand resources to help physicians, practices, and health systems navigate telehealth optimization. The program provides up-to-date education on the telehealth landscape and offers deep dives into aspects of telehealth including, but not limited to:

- Clinical best practices
- Integration with other health care technologies
- The impact of telehealth on the quadruple aim
- Virtual care expansion opportunities
- Barriers and challenges

Join a network of peers nationwide in exploring these concepts and more. Register for upcoming events, watch recordings, or access available resources.

Return on Health

The AMA, in collaboration with Manatt Health, has developed a "Return on Health" framework to demonstrate the value of digitally enabled care that accounts for ways in which a wide range of telehealth programs can increase health and generate a positive impact for patients, clinicians, and payors and society.

Demonstrating the value of telehealth in practice is critical to support national and local advocacy efforts to ensure virtual care coverage and payment remains in place. Help demonstrate the value of telehealth by completing a fillable framework and contributing a case study on how telehealth has generated value at your organization—financial and beyond. Contribute to the grassroots campaign today.

The Telehealth Initiative

The Telehealth Initiative, led by the Physicians Foundation in collaboration with the AMA, is designed to bolster implementation support at the state level by equipping state medical associations with telehealth programming to build on existing efforts. Each state medical society recruits a cohort of practices committed to participating in educational sessions and data collection efforts over the course of a year. Through this initiative, the AMA works with participating state medical associations to develop educational content, resources, measurement tools, and evaluation support to help practices in optimizing or sustaining telehealth. In addition to providing ongoing support, this year's program will emphasize the importance of realizing the true value of virtual care. State medical associations will have access to the AMA Return on Health framework to support measuring the value of virtual care in practices across their region or state.

In 2022, participating medical associations include:

- Montana Medical Society
- Medical Society of the State of New York
- Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio
- Massachusetts Medical Society, and
- Iowa Medical Society

Organizations that are within one of these regions that would like to join a cohort committed to measuring the value of virtual care over time are encouraged to contact us at digital.health@ama-assn.org.

Digital Health Implementation Playbooks

AMA's Digital Health Implementation Playbooks package key steps, best practices, and resources to accelerate the adoption of digital health innovations, helping physicians extend care beyond the exam room. The series includes the Telehealth Implementation Playbook, the Remote Patient Monitoring Implementation Playbook, the Telehealth Quick Guide, and the Telehealth Clinical Education Playbook.

Research

The AMA regularly conducts national telehealth and digital health research to understand current usage and key requirements for continued use and enthusiasm for future adoption. Recent research includes a digital health study conducted in 2019 to determine physicians' motivations and requirements for the adoption of digital clinical tools and a Telehealth Impact Study that highlighted the wide expansion of telehealth services in many specialty areas, high levels of satisfaction with the services, and a look at barriers that could affect the continued use and improvement of these services.

References

1. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systems-and-services/our-insights/telehealth-a-quarter-trillion-dollar-post-covid-19-reality

2. https://c19hcc.org/telehealth/