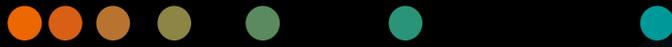


8 Benefits of Telehealth and Why You Should Be Paying Attention



Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an eye-opener for what really matters in both personal and professional life. Healthcare providers are especially faced with new challenges: balancing best-practice patient care, reworking guidelines to protect and support their personnel, and much more. **These challenges gave telehealth the chance to grab the spotlight.**

The benefits of telehealth are striking, offering hospitals the chance to brand themselves as innovative and using cutting-edge technologically. And while the pandemic has pushed telehealth forward, its ability to provide a high level of medical care in numerous situations will **make telehealth a permanent fixture in healthcare.** Continuous improvements in technology and further simplifications of tedious processes support this evolution.^{1,2,3}

Here, we summarize **8 reasons why you should consider telehealth** to be part of the holistic health practice of your hospital.

[siemens-healthineers.com/telehealth](https://www.siemens-healthineers.com/telehealth)

1. Expand Your Patient Base

A frustrating element of in-person care has always been late or no-show patients. It results in time lost for the Health Care Practitioner (HCP) as well as the lost opportunity to reach out to a new patient. Now, imagine HCP's days full of virtual medical visits. There is a reduction of no-shows and increased treatment persistence⁴, mainly because of treatment success. In a survey based in the US, patients that experienced telehealth visits highly rated this type of healthcare (recommendations: > 80%)^{5,6}, stating it was beneficial for their mental health as well.⁷

Additionally, HCPs' patient base can be dramatically expanded since telehealth provides easy access and scheduling. In a cross-sectional survey, 52.5% of clinicians were convinced that virtual visits allow for higher efficiency, while quality was equal to that of in-person visits.⁵

For healthcare providers, the promotion of telehealth solutions can lead to increased patient numbers. Via telehealth opportunities, you easily enlarge the catchment area of your hospital. This is of particular interest in the countries, where most of the overall population lives in rural areas.^{6,8,9}

2. Increased Patient Flexibility

When scheduling a doctor's appointment, patients must consider a variety of personal barriers, such as: travel time, time off work, childcare, and more. Telehealth visits dramatically reduce these accompanying problems, leading to stress reduction and increased flexibility – even in emergency situations. In fact, this kind of convenience was highly appreciated and preferred by established patients as shown by Donelan et al.⁵

In a survey among telehealth patients in the UK conducted by Dhahri et al., family closeness was one of the most appreciated advantages of telehealth.¹⁰ This may be due to elderly patients or children having support from their adult family members during virtual visits. In a cross-sectional telehealth narrative analysis conducted by Kruse et al., preferred modality and improved self-management were among the most frequent factors mentioned by patients.¹¹

Based on this, in addition to medical advantages, patients benefit as well from reduced transportation and waiting times. Collectively, on-demand virtual visits can help your patients to balance work, life, and healthcare.

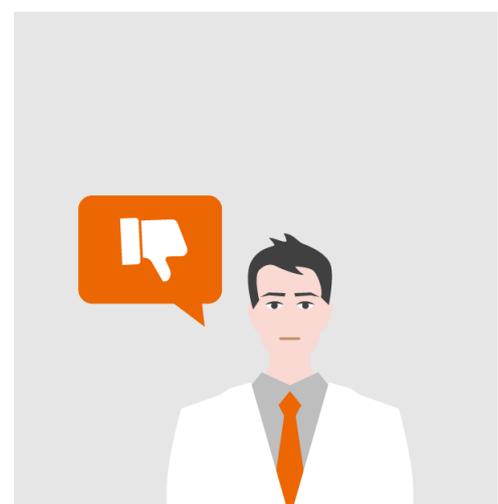
3. Increase Collaboration Opportunities between Medical Disciplines

A full-service hospital combines an extensive variety of medical disciplines. Optimized communication between patient-directed disciplines and diagnostic facilities, such as radiology or laboratory medicine, is important to achieve fast and straight-forward healthcare measures.¹² As a result, a higher pace regarding treatment times and therapies potentially benefits the patients' well-being.

Combining expertise increases diagnostic value. Consulting physicians can be invited easily and attend virtual visits on-demand¹³, which offers a quick second opinion or additional experience. Scientific exchange and productivity also benefit from digital opportunities by providing easier access to people and/or data.

Furthermore, congresses, seminars, or trainings are easily accessible via digital platforms, which reduces costs, time, and effort.¹⁴ Telehealth opportunities therefore strongly impact medical education (and

52.5%
of physicians convinced Virtual
Visits have **higher efficiency**.⁵



probably career perspectives) of your healthcare personnel.¹⁵

4. Increased Patient Adherence

Easy access to generalists and specialists is key for patient adherence, treatment success, and hospital promotion. Proven factors include close monitoring, satisfaction, and short waiting periods.¹⁶

A study performed in rural areas of Colombia showed that 65% of the patients see telehealth appointments as an overall improvement in healthcare.⁶ Another study further showed that 65% of patients were likely to get a call with a specialist, particularly in cases which are relevant for pre-op visits or follow-ups.

Telehealth also increases adherence while at the same time, reducing hospital readmissions, according to a study with chronic heart failure patients.¹⁷ Also regarding mental health, telehealth services have been proven to effectively support service delivery and reduction of depressive symptoms.^{7,18}

Virtual care is a promising approach to increase and keep patient adherence and persistence. This implies that even for novel disease onsets, patients will stay with their preferred healthcare institution. Plainly stated: the happy patient comes back again.

5. Allows for Easy Patient Follow-Up

Advances in treatment adherence and persistence mainly rely on regular and systematic touchpoints by HCPs.¹⁹ Telehealth opportunities and remote care options can

create a variety of these touchpoints in a personalized and case-specific way, ranging from an overview of patient consultations to implantable cardiac monitors.²⁰ Remote monitoring especially holds tremendous potential to profit from telehealth applications.¹⁵

For example, treating major chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular diseases or cancer requires continuously monitored data to optimize medication. Intuitive software tools can help to connect care teams and patients. Sharing medical information in real-time is key to structuring patient engagement. In a Japanese single-centered study, remote cardiac monitoring patients dramatically profited from shortened notification time of events and waiting times.²⁰

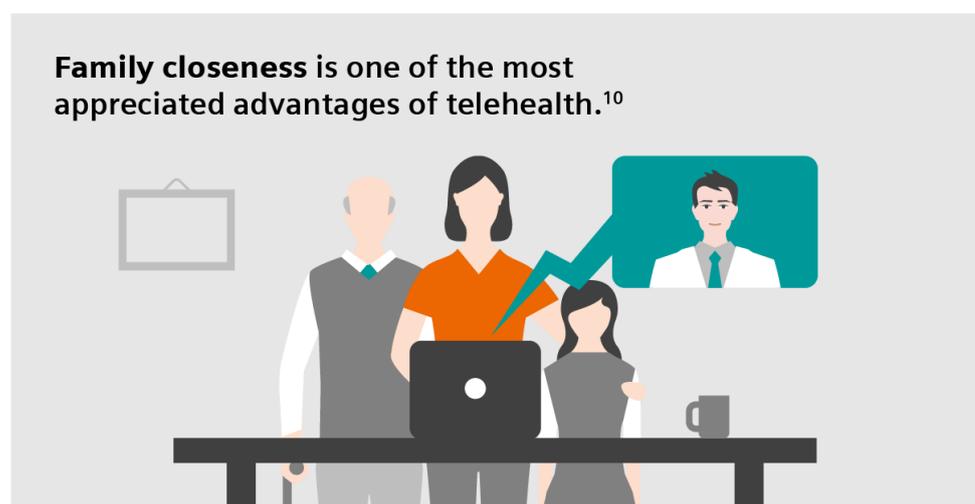
Digital symptom calendars and diagnostic tools support treatment decisions and speed.³³ Depending on the disease and patient type, digital engagement and follow-up can extremely benefit treatment outcomes and quality of life.²¹

6. Improved Patient Outcomes

Telehealth options can reduce the risk of infection and allow care teams to assess their patients potentially better.

By using telehealth options, already health compromised patients have a lower risk of infection when it comes to classical healthcare-associated pathogens, such as multi-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).^{22,23} Telehealth can therefore reduce complications or potential disease progression for patients.

Moreover, you have more possibilities to educate patients regarding their treatment plan, whether it be medication or hands-on therapy. By using digital tools,



zooming in scans for a close-up or watching self-injection videos, you allow for flexible and direct communication which can improve patient satisfaction.³

It is also of note to mention, the opportunity for a physician or care team to see the environment of the patient. Take an allergist, for example. By meeting with the patient in their home, they are able to identify clues in their surroundings during a virtual visit. This allows the care provider to identify issues the patient might not have mentioned before and allow for an improved treatment plan.²⁴

To sum up, optimized treatment outcomes help your hospital to raise patient satisfaction and be attractive as working place.

7. Physicians and Care Teams Benefit Regarding Their Mental and Physical Health

Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, doctors were able to hold the necessary distance from potentially infectious patients while staying in touch digitally. Virtual consultations became applicable and led to the rising numbers of features and platforms.²⁵

However, besides the pivotal role of protecting doctors' physical health²⁶, telehealth options also allow for optimized workload planning, improving your physicians work-life balance. In a representative survey among 1,594 physicians across the U.S., 55% agreed or strongly agreed to the sentiment: "Telehealth has improved the satisfaction of my work."²⁷

Considering that physical and mental health of care teams are key, telehealth and virtual care opportunities

are important to maintain your hospitals' care-force, even during unpredictable times.¹⁶

8. Cost Reduction

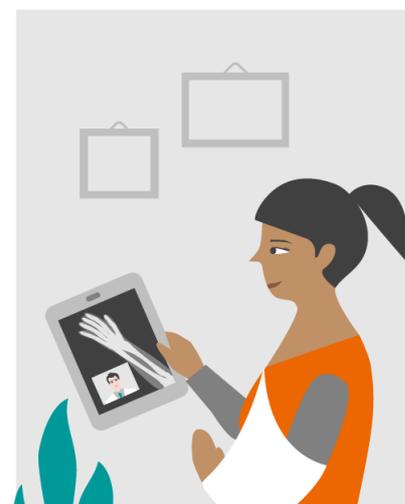
Telehealth solutions can reduce costs in various medical disciplines, such as dermatology, pediatric medicine, and cardiology.²⁸ Moreover, general expenses like front desk support, space for medical examination rooms, and material can be reduced. Telehealth opportunities may reflect a favorable add-on for your hospital considering easy-to-use implementation, financial benefits, and cost reduction.

Telehealth cost reduction also applies for patients. For example, in Germany, digital health application access is regulated by the digital healthcare act (DVG: Digitale-Versorgung-Gesetz) from 2019, making it easier also for patients to cover benefits from digital health, since insurances are required to pay for applications with certain specifications.²⁹

Conclusion

The benefits of telehealth opportunities are striking – for patients, doctors, and hospitals. Constantly increasing numbers of services, tools, devices, and apps enter the market and significantly improve healthcare procedures across all medical disciplines.³⁰⁻³³ COVID-19 has served as door-opener for telehealth and digital medicine. You should consider keeping the door open.

Digital tools allow for flexible and direct communication, benefiting patient satisfaction.³



References

1. Smith et al. Telehealth for global emergencies: Implications for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357633X20916567>.
2. Monagesh et al. The role of telehealth during COVID-19 outbreak: a systematic review based on current evidence. *BMC Public Health*. 2020. 20:1193. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-09301-4>.
3. AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION. Telehealth Implementation Playbook. 2020.
4. Gandapur et al. The role of mHealth for improving medication adherence in patients with cardiovascular disease: a systematic review. *Eur Heart J Qual Care Clin Outcomes*. 2016 Oct; 2(4): 237–244.
5. Donelan et al. Patient and Clinician Experiences with Telehealth for Patient Follow-up Care, *Am J Manag Care*. 2019; 25(1): 40–44.
6. López et al. A telephone survey of patient satisfaction with realtime telemedicine in a rural community in Colombia. *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*. 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1258/jtt.2010.100611>.
7. Reay et al. Telehealth mental health services during COVID-19: summary of evidence and clinical practice. *Australas Psychiatry*. 2020 Oct; 28(5): 514–516. 14
8. Gajarawala et al. Telehealth Benefits and Barriers. *J Nurse Pract*. 2021 Feb; 17(2): 218–221.
9. WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. Telemedicine: opportunities and developments in Member States: report on the second global survey on eHealth. 2009. (Global Observatory for eHealth Series, 2).
10. Dhahri et al. The Benefits and Risks of the Provision of a Hospital-Wide High-Definition Video Conferencing Virtual Visiting Service for Patients and Their Relatives. *Cureus*. 2021. DOI: 10.7759/cureus.13435.
11. Kruse et al. Telehealth and patient satisfaction: a systematic review and narrative analysis. *BMJ Open*. 2017; 7: e016242. DOI:10.1136/bmjopen-2017-016242.
12. Henry et al. Clinician behaviors in telehealth care delivery: a systematic review. *Adv in Health Sci Educ*. 2016. DOI: 10.1007/s10459-016-9717-2.
13. Zughni et al. Telemedicine and the Interdisciplinary Clinic Model: During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond. *Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery* 2020, Vol. 163(4) 673–675.
14. Jumreornvong et al. Telemedicine and Medical Education in the Age of COVID-19. *Acad Med*. 2020. DOI: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000003711.
15. Rutledge et al. Telehealth and eHealth in nurse practitioner training: current perspectives. *Adv Med Educ Pract*. 2017; 8: 399–409.
16. Schwamm et al. Virtual care: new models of caring for our patients and workforce. *The Lancet*. 2020. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2589-7500\(20\)30104-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2589-7500(20)30104-7).
17. O'Connor et al. Using Telehealth to Reduce All-Cause 30-Day Hospital Readmissions among Heart Failure Patients Receiving Skilled Home Health Services. *Appl Clin Inform*. 2016; 7(2): 238–247.
18. Donker et al. Internet-Delivered Interpersonal Psychotherapy Versus Internet-Delivered Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Adults With Depressive Symptoms: Randomized Controlled Noninferiority Trial. *J Med Internet Res*. 2013 May; 15(5): e82.
19. Matthes et al. Verbesserung und Auswirkungen medikamentöser Therapietreue. *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*. 2014. Jg. 111, Heft 4
20. Togo et al. Assessment of the clinical benefits of remote monitoring of cardiac-implanted devices: A single-center study in Japan. *Journal of Arrhythmia* 29. 2013: 13–19.
21. Kenealy et al. Telecare for Diabetes, CHF or COPD: Effect on Quality of Life, Hospital Use and Costs. A Randomized Controlled Trial and Qualitative Evaluation. *PLoS ONE* 10(3): e0116188. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0116188.
22. Russell et al. Telemedicine: One Way to Reduce Clostridium difficile Infection in Hospitals and Long-Term Care Facilities. *American Journal of Clinical Pathology*, Volume 144, Issue suppl_2, 1 October 2015, Page A183.
23. Young et al. Infectious Diseases Society of America Position Statement on Telehealth and Telemedicine as Applied to the Practice of Infectious Diseases. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. 2019. 68(9): 1437–43.
24. Keswani et al. The Future of Telehealth in Allergy and Immunology Training. *J Allergy Clin Immunol Pract*. 2020; 8(7): 2135–2141.
25. Gilman-Wells et al. COVID-19 Reducing the Risks: Telemedicine is the New Norm for Surgical Consultations and Communications. *Aesthetic Plast Surg*. 2020 Sep 3: 1–6.
26. American Hospital Association. COVID-19: Telehealth and Virtual Care Best Practices. 2020.
27. The COVID-19 Healthcare Coalition Telehealth Impact Study Work Group. COVID-19 Telehealth Impact Study. <https://c19hcc.org/telehealth/>
28. Snoswell et al. Determining if Telehealth Can Reduce Health System Costs: Scoping Review. *J Med Internet Res*. 2020 Oct; 22(10): e17298.
29. Gerke et al. Germany's digital health reforms in the COVID-19 era: lessons and opportunities for other countries. *Npj Digital Medicine*. 2020.
30. Hakim et al. Implications for the use of telehealth in surgical patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Am J Surg*. 2020 Jul; 220(1): 48–49.
31. Rahman et al. Letter to the Editor: "Telehealth and Telemedicine in the COVID-19 Era: A World of Opportunities for the Neurosurgeon". *World Neurosurg*. 2020 Oct; 142: 541–542.
32. Asad et al. Telemedicine: A New Frontier in Clinical Practice. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*. 2021. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12669/pjms.37.2.3592>.
33. Romanick-Schmiedl et al. Telemedicine — maintaining quality during times of transition. *Nature Reviews Disease Primers*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41572-020-0185-x>.

Siemens Healthineers Headquarters

Siemens Healthcare GmbH

Henkestr. 127

91052 Erlangen, Germany

Phone: +49 9131 84-0

[siemens-healthineers.com](https://www.siemens-healthineers.com)