



COVID-19 Telehealth Quick Start Guide

➤ ASSESS – What does my organization need to get started with Telehealth amid COVID-19?

Getting Started	AMA Quick Guide to telemedicine in practiceⁱ - https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/digital/ama-quick-guide-telemedicine-practice
Assess Workflow	Set up a team that will help facilitate the expedited implementation of telemedicine services and be able to make decisions quickly to ensure launch as soon as possible. (Here is a sample workflow using telehealth)
Insurance	Check with your malpractice insurance carrier to ensure your policy covers providing care via telemedicine. (Here is a sample document for reference)
Payment	Familiarize yourself with payment and policy guidelines specific to various telemedicine services. (Here is the link to NC Medicaid coverage for COVID-19. AMA also has helpful coding resources here . Check with your payers for telehealth coverage.)

➤ IMPLEMENT – How does my organization successfully implement Telehealth?

Vendor evaluation selection and contracting	AAFP Using Telehealth to Care for Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemicⁱⁱ - https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19-daily/telehealth.html
Existing EMR for Telehealth	Check with your existing EHR vendor to see if there is telehealth functionality that can be turned on.
Low cost Vendor options	Reach out to your state medical association/society for guidance on vendor evaluation, selection and contracting. (Here are a few free or low-cost vendor options)
Vendor questions	Introducing new technology into practice quickly can be challenging, but a few things to keep in mind as you navigate a speedy implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure HIPAA-compliance* ➤ Make sure you understand who has access to and owns any data generated during a patient visit ➤ Get clear on the pricing structure (i.e. is there a monthly flat rate for using the technology or is it per call or per visit?)
Workflow & Patient care	Determine protocols for if/when a telehealth visit is appropriate up front and train clinicians, care team members and schedulers. Consider a short survey or set of questions that patients can either answer electronically or over the phone when your patients are scheduling to properly triage.

Scheduling	Determine when telehealth visits will be available on the schedule (i.e. throughout the day intermixed with in-person visits or for a set block of time specifically devoted to virtual visits).
Telehealth Workspace	Set up space in your practice to accommodate telehealth visits. This can be an exam room or other quiet office space to have clear communication with patients. If multiple members of the care team will be helping to facilitate telehealth visits, ensure they know where to support the set-up of the technology and communicate with patients virtually.
Documentation	Ensure you are still properly documenting these visits – preferably in your existing EHR as you normally would with an in-person visit. This will keep the patient’s medical record together, allow for consistent procedures for ordering testing, medications, etc. and support billing for telehealth visits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure you receive advanced consent from patients for telemedicine interactions. This should be documented in the patient’s record. Check to see if your technology vendor can support this electronically. Sample consent form in Spanish here.
Outreach to Patients	Let your patients know the practice is now offering telehealth services when they call the office. Have your office staff help support pro-active patient outreach. Additionally, post announcements on your website, patient portals and other patient-facing communications. (Here is a free telehealth communications toolkit that can be customized for your practice)

- **MONITOR AND IMPROVE** – Continuously ask “What can my organization do to monitor our telehealth effectiveness and improve?”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center (MATRC) - <https://www.matrc.org/matrc-telehealth-resources-for-covid-19/>
- Broadband Resources - <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/covid19broadband/>
- NC Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) - <https://www.ncahec.net/news/resources-and-courses-on-covid-19/>
- HITEQ Center - <https://hiteqcenter.org/Resources/HITEQ-Resources/telehealth-policy-during-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

For additional questions or information please email: ORH_telehealth@dhhs.nc.gov

* Given the special circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government has [announced](#) that the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) will exercise its enforcement discretion and will not impose penalties on physicians using telehealth in the event of noncompliance with regulatory requirements under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in connection with the good faith provision of telehealth during the COVID-19 national public health emergency.

ⁱ <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/digital/ama-quick-guide-telemedicine-practice>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19-daily/telehealth.html>