

University of Vermont

ScholarWorks @ UVM

Family Medicine Clerkship Student Projects

Larner College of Medicine

2020

Assessing Telehealth as a Mode of Healthcare Delivery

Ambrose Orr

University of Vermont, Larner College of Medicine

Adrian Berg

University of Vermont, Larner College of Medicine

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/fmclerk>



Part of the [Medical Education Commons](#), and the [Primary Care Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Orr, Ambrose and Berg, Adrian, "Assessing Telehealth as a Mode of Healthcare Delivery" (2020). *Family Medicine Clerkship Student Projects*. 603.

<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/fmclerk/603>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Larner College of Medicine at ScholarWorks @ UVM. It has been accepted for inclusion in Family Medicine Clerkship Student Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UVM. For more information, please contact donna.omalley@uvm.edu.

Assessing Telehealth as a Mode of Healthcare Delivery

Ambrose Orr and Adrian Berg

Dr. David Reisman, MD

South Burlington Family Medicine

Problem Identification

Covid has forced the widespread adoption of telehealth modules, there are many unanswered questions related to the efficacy of telehealth to meet both patient and provider needs

Hypothetical positives:

- Previous research has demonstrated that a lack of transportation is a major barrier to care for rural vermonters, Telehealth could lower this critical barrier.
- Telehealth provides greater scheduling flexibility for providers, which could potentially foster healthier work life balance and reduce physician burnout

Potential pitfalls

- Generational divides with technology could lead to lower patient & provider visit satisfaction
- Lack of in-person visits can lead to limitations with visual inspections as well as physical exams
- Patients could have issues with access to telehealth technologies creating a whole new barrier to healthcare
- Issues with getting insurance to give equal coverage to telehealth

Public Health Cost in Chittenden County

Vermont agency of Human Services / Department of Vermont Health access has extended medicare/aid coverage for telemedicine as well as phone health during the Emergency Response to Covid -19 [1]

According to a previous study conducted in Chittenden county 69% of older adults had reported issues with making it to health appointments due to transportations [2]. Nationally, 3.6 million Americans a year experience issues with getting transportation access to healthcare appointments [3]

Vermont Department of Public Service states that in 2019 6.8% of buildings in the state did not have access to an internet connection with >4.1 Mbs/S, a potential barrier to Telehealth [4]

Vermont has one of the oldest populations in the country. Generational divides with technology can serve as a major barrier with Telehealth [5]

Community Perspective

It's felt that telehealth is a net positive for the practice.

- “Reduced travel for patients, easier to schedule close follow up, and the visit can be more focused from a provider perspective.” - SBFM provider

Shared belief that more patients experience barriers with transportation vs. barriers to access internet and telehealth software.

Most patient complaints can be addressed with HPI and ROS with a smaller % of patients needing to schedule in-person follow up for symptoms.

No change reported in provider job satisfaction with shift in healthcare delivery

Providers acknowledge that a major limitation is communicating to telehealth patients when providers are behind schedule

Intervention/Methodology

To assess patient attitudes towards telehealth and accessibility we implemented a brief 5 question survey to be taken following a telehealth encounter.

Survey was created using third party website Surveymonkey.com

No patient identifiable information was collected.

Verbal consent was obtained from patients during the telehealth encounter

Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SBWV9BV>

Telehealth Survey

Primary Care Telehealth Assessment Survey

To be completed following telehealth visit with providers

- Were all of your concerns addressed over video chat? Y / N
- Did the doctor schedule a follow-up appointment in the office for your concerns following this video chat? Y / N
- Did you have any technology issues when logging into the video chat? Y / N
- Do you have a private location with Internet access to get on the video chat? Y / N
- After this visit would you be willing to see the doctor over video chat again? Y / N

Results/Response

Logistical delays lead to brief data collection period.

14 surveys issued to patients with 3 responses

- All 3 respondents stated their concerns were met during the encounter
- $\frac{2}{3}$ of the respondents had to be scheduled for an in-person visit
- $\frac{2}{3}$ of the respondents had technology problems when accessing the visit software
- All 3 respondents had access to a private room with internet for the visit
- 1 of the respondents stated they would not use telehealth again for future visits

Evaluate Effectiveness/limitations

A post-encounter survey could be an effective model to assess patients attitudes towards telehealth, and addressing it during the encounter while also providing the survey in the video chat software may encourage better turn around.

Although we only asked 5 questions it is felt by many of the providers that they are an adequate way to screen overall patient satisfaction with this modality.

Major limitations of this design include:

- Patients must access the survey prior to closing the encounter where the link is posted
- Patients are often seeing the physician between other appointments or work activities and may not have time to complete the survey

Further surveys could capture a better overall understanding of attitudes

Recommendations for Future intervention

Given the short data collection period it is recommended that this survey be administered over a longer period of time by multiple providers in the office to get more adequate data.

The current results demonstrate somewhat positive satisfaction with the telehealthcare model. If the further surveys demonstrate that there is greater patient dissatisfaction then interventions could be established to improve satisfaction and optimize healthcare delivery.

Understanding major barriers to telehealth access and usage will allow providers to better educate patients on the software features to facilitate patient satisfaction.

References

1. [Vermont Medicaid: Telehealth, Telemedicine & Telephonic Coverage](https://dvha.vermont.gov/sites/dvha/files/documents/News/Vermont%20Medicaid%20Telehealth%20Telemedicine_Telephonic%20Emergency%20Response%20to%20COVID-19.pdf),
https://dvha.vermont.gov/sites/dvha/files/documents/News/Vermont%20Medicaid%20Telehealth%20Telemedicine_Telephonic%20Emergency%20Response%20to%20COVID-19.pdf
2. [Transportation is a barrier to accessing primary care in Vermont](https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1634&context=fmclerk),
<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1634&context=fmclerk>
3. [Transportation as a Barrier to Healthcare](https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1521&context=fmclerk),
<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1521&context=fmclerk>
4. Vermont Department of Public Service, [Broadband High Speed Internet Availability in Vermont](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/broadband-availability),
<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/broadband-availability>
5. Wolf, A. (2018) [Vermont's Median Age is Nearly 5 Years Older than the Nation](https://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/money/2018/07/05/vermonts-median-age-nearly-5-years-older-than-nations/746515002/),
<https://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/money/2018/07/05/vermonts-median-age-nearly-5-years-older-than-nations/746515002/>