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Healthcare Leaders Form Taskforce on Telehealth

Will produce recommendations on crucial issues for future of remote care services.

Amidst an unprecedented increase in the use of remote medical services, twenty of the nation's leading healthcare voices today announced the formation of a Taskforce on Telehealth Policy aimed at developing long-term recommendations.

The group – representing a broad spectrum of plans, providers, consumer advocates and health quality experts from the public, private and non-profit sectors – will develop consensus recommendations for policymakers on how to maximize the benefits of telehealth services while maintaining high standards for patient safety and program integrity. Other priorities to be addressed include the integration of remote care into the healthcare ecosystem and ensuring the quality, accessibility, and efficacy of telehealth. The taskforce will be convened by the [National Committee for Quality Assurance](#), [Alliance for Connected Care](#), and the [American Telemedicine Association](#) (ATA).

The need for a comprehensive review of telehealth policy is highlighted by some remarkable data collected since March. Every element of healthcare has been affected by the major increases in telehealth and remote patient care. Many patients and providers have experienced the capabilities of telehealth for the first time and are interested in continuing to use it. Traditional (fee-for-service) Medicare has seen the number of remote visits increase from roughly 12,000 per week to over a million per week, according to recent comments from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma.

The Commonwealth Fund found that, in the mid-April peak of the current spread, in-person visits fell by nearly 70 percent, with telehealth visits offsetting as much as 20 percent of that decline. Many public and private payers, including CMS, have substantially relaxed telehealth restrictions during the pandemic.

“We need to get this moment in healthcare right by optimizing the quality and value of telehealth for everyone,” said NCQA President Margaret (Peggy) O’Kane. “The fact that such an accomplished group of people are willing to dedicate their time, on short notice, to this task speaks to how high the stakes truly are.”

“The value of telehealth during this emergency is undeniable, and the policy changes that were made by Congress and the Trump Administration were essential,” said Alliance for Connected Care Executive Director Krista Drobac. “This Taskforce can take what we have collectively learned in the past three months and develop thoughtful recommendations that will provide access to remote care for the long-term while balancing cost, quality and judicious use of taxpayer dollars.”



“The ATA was proud to represent our industry at yesterday’s Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions hearing on telehealth, helping to build the case for extending access to virtual care indefinitely. This Telehealth Policy Task Force will help to maintain a strong, unified, and compelling voice needed to cement those gains,” added Ann Mond Johnson, CEO, the ATA. “Telehealth has played a vital role in responding to the pandemic, driving a rapid transformation in how care is delivered. Working together, we must ensure access to care for all who need it.”

The Taskforce on Telehealth will hold its first meeting on Monday, June 29 and deliberate through the summer. Final recommendations will be issued in early September. A full list of Taskforce on Telehealth Members is below.

Membership, Taskforce on Telehealth Policy (as of June 19, 2020)

Peter Antall, MD, Chief Medical Officer, AmWell

Regina Benjamin, MD, Chief Executive Officer, BayouClinic/Gulf States Health Policy Center, former Surgeon General of the United States

Krista Drobac, Executive Director, Alliance for Connected Care

Yul Ejnes, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, Brown University; Board of Regents Chair-Emeritus, American College of Physicians

Rebekah Gee, MD, Chief Executive Officer, Louisiana State University Health System

Nancy Gin, MD, Executive Vice President of Quality & Chief Quality Officer, Kaiser Permanente Federation

Kate Goodrich, MD, Senior Vice President Trend and Analytics, Humana

Ann Mond Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, American Telemedicine Association

Chuck Ingoglia, President & Chief Executive Officer, National Council for Behavioral Health

Chris Meyer, Director of Virtual Care, Marshfield Clinic

Megan Mahoney, MD, Chief of Staff, Stanford Health Care, Clinical Professor, Division of Primary Care and Population Health, Stanford University

Peggy O’Kane, President, National Committee for Quality Assurance

Sean Cavanaugh, Chief Administrative Officer, Aledade

Kerry Palakanis, DNP, APRN, Executive Director, Connected Care Operations, Intermountain Healthcare

Nicholas Uehlecke, Advisor, US Department of Health & Human Services (observer only)

Michelle Schreiber, MD, Director, Quality Measurement & Value-Based Incentives Group, Center for Clinical Standards & Quality, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services



Dorothy Siemon, JD, Senior Vice President for Policy Development, AARP

Julia Skapik, MD, MPH , Medical Director, Informatics, National Association of Community Health Centers

Jason Tibbels, MD, Chief Quality Officer, Teladoc

Andrew Watson, MD, Vice President, University of Pennsylvania Medical Center

Cynthia Zelis, MD, MBA, Chief Medical Officer, MD Live