Taskforce on Telehealth Policy (TTP)
Findings and Recommendations
September 15, 2020
Our Charge

• Evaluate rapid transition to telehealth during COVID-19

• Develop consensus recommendations to:
  - Mitigate risks
  - Maximize benefits
  - Ensure quality, accessibility and efficacy
  - Fully integrate telehealth into healthcare ecosystem

Subgroups formed to focus on priority areas:
  - Patient Safety and Program Integrity
  - Data Flow, Care Coordination and Quality Measures
  - Impact on Total Cost of Care
Members of the Taskforce on Telehealth Policy

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Top-Line Findings

• Telehealth is healthcare’s natural evolution into the digital age, not another type of care

• Telehealth can be critical tool in advancing a well-coordinated, patient-centered, value-optimized health care system

• COVID-19 flexibilities generated new evidence and adaptations that question restrictions from when technology was less mature and use cases more limited
Impact on Total Cost of Care

• No excess cost and utilization observed thus far during COVID – need data from post-pandemic to draw firm conclusions on impact of expanded telehealth
  o Increased behavioral care is an exception and may have potential to improve costs and outcomes

• Telehealth may also improve costs via:
  o Fewer missed appointment (no-show rates) that improve compliance
  o Fewer costly SNF patient transfers to hospitals/EDs
  o More use of transitional care management that cuts readmissions
Kerry Palakanis, DNP, APRN
Intermountain Healthcare
Patient Safety and Program Integrity

• Telehealth can enhance safety by preventing care delays, reducing exposure to pathogens, minimizing travel
  o Fund research on patient safety best practices and update existing safety reporting for telehealth

• Emerging tools, such as artificial intelligence, may have potential to make it easier to detect fraud, waste and abuse that occurs throughout health care
  o With telehealth, investigators can uncover Internet Protocol (IP) addresses and other digital signatures to help ID bad actors
Nancy Gin, MD,
The Permanente Federation
Data Flow, Integration, Quality Measures

• Value-based care models best leverage telehealth’s potential

• Hold telehealth to same quality standards as other settings
  o Adapt, rather than reinvent, quality measures for telehealth

• Require telehealth platform certification on data sharing, care coordination, privacy
  o Align with 21st Century Cures Act / other care setting policies

• Move to living, care coordination document shared among all care team members (not just telehealth) and away from silos

• Pilot digital patient experience surveys leveraging telehealth digital aspects
Andrew Watson, MD, Mlitt.  
University of Pittsburg Medical Center
Overarching Findings & Recommendations

• Broadband, tech, trust, digital literacy gaps need to be promptly addressed to ensure equity and not increase disparities as health care moves into digital age

• Permanently lift telehealth restrictions on originating sites, clinicians, conditions and previous clinician/patient relationships and care across state lines as long as encounters meet appropriate standards of care or unless limits are necessary in specific situations

• Resume full HIPAA privacy enforcement
Regina Benjamin, MD
Former Surgeon General of the United States
Questions?
Thank You!