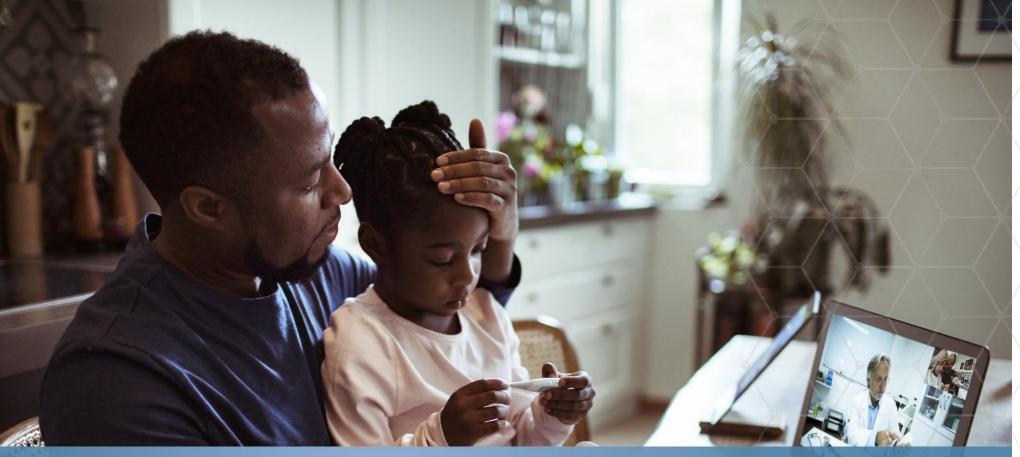September
2020

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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Kate Berry, AHIP

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Andrew Watson, MD, UPMC

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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
  - Increased behavioral care is an exception and may have potential to improve costs and outcomes

- Telehealth may also improve costs via:
  - Fewer missed appointment (no-show rates) that improve compliance
  - Fewer costly SNF patient transfers to hospitals/EDs
  - More use of transitional care management that cuts readmissions

Taskforce on Telehealth Policy (TTP)

Kerry Palakanis, DNP, APRN
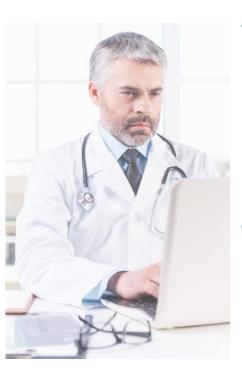Intermountain Healthcare

Patient Safety and Program Integrity

- Telehealth can enhance safety by preventing care delays, reducing exposure to pathogens, minimizing travel
  - 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
  - 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
    - Adapt, rather than reinvent, quality measures for telehealth

- Require telehealth platform certification on data sharing, care coordination, privacy
    - 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!