

Telehealth in Wyoming:

Easier Than You Think!

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For years, doctors have been hearing about telehealth and the promise it held, but the perceived barriers were too much to entice many providers into trying telehealth.

"It's too complicated, it doesn't pay, the patients won't like it," are just a few of the most common myths. The reality is it has never been easier to provide telehealth, it is occurring today in Wyoming, and your patients can benefit from it as well.

MYTH #1 - It's too complicated! When telehealth first came out the equipment was expensive and daunting! There were new remotes, the monitor looked like the viewscreen on Star Trek, and you needed Scotty at the controls to connect you and keep a clear signal. No wonder many Tandbergs and Polycom units shortly became the medical equipment equivalent of an exercise bicycle in March- an expensive coat hanger. Now with the Wyoming state contract with Zoom, anyone with internet access can send a HIPAA compliant invitation to a patient through their phone, tablet or computer at NO cost. All you need to do is contact the Wyoming Telehealth Network at the website shown at the bottom of this article to receive a free Zoom license.

MYTH #2 - It doesn't pay. Not true! Wyoming is one of the most telehealth-friendly states in the union. It is covered by Medicaid, Medicare, Cigna, and by all reports of all the other payers in Wyoming. Medicaid pays the same as in-person visits and even allows the patient to be seen in their home! To code it, you just add the modifier GT to the code. As in a 99213GT. If the patient is seeing a specialist from your office, you can also bill an originating site code, Q3014. And if there is a code that can reasonably be done by telehealth, WDH can open it for you. For example an ENT doc in Denver is adjusting cochlear implants via telehealth, and WDH opened those codes. Just review all the requirements in your provider man-

ual on pages 111-116.

MYTH #3 - The patients won't like it! A patient satisfaction study was performed here in Wyoming and 97.4% reported being comfortable with telehealth. 84% preferred using telehealth to only 16% preferring in-person psychiatric visits. And no wonder, 54% had to travel over 20 miles with 28% having to travel over 100 miles to see a psychiatrist! Once patients know they can see specialists without hours of windshield time, they become fast adopters.

Telehealth can be used for primary care visits, consultations and even education via ECHO clinics that are provided through the University of Wyoming. All the resources can be found on the WDH webpage. Just Google Wyoming Telehealth, and the webpage for the Telehealth Consortium is right there. There is also a directory of providers with their specialties and contact information. Make sure your name gets added to the list! There is a toolkit, training and technical support all available from the site. Visit <https://www.uwyo.edu/wind/wytn/about.html>.

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