Moving from Reactive to Proactive in your Telehealth Plans

Due to the COVID pandemic, many hospitals and practices were put in a position to quickly adopt a telehealth solution in response to the crisis. For many at that time, the idea of long term needs was not factored into the decision-making process as the goal was to get a solution up and running quickly. As the sentiment around telehealth has changed from a temporary solution to help for the immediate term to one that is here to stay for the long term, and with the possibility of a wave two right around the corner, now is the opportunity to take a step back and assess what the future might be for your hospital or medical practice's longer term telehealth needs so you can be proactive. Here are the top considerations in moving from a reactive to a proactive telehealth plan:

Reactive:

Pick a cost-effective solution that can work – we need one now!

Proactive:

The solution we first chose really isn't working for our hospital – it's too complicated to use. What do we really need for a successful telehealth solution?

The Plan:

The right telehealth solution should fit seamlessly into your practice – it should adjust to your needs rather than you having to adjust to it. Your admin staff and schedulers should be able to create customizations and schedule appointments while providers should just start visits when patients enter a virtual waiting room. Looking to the future, does your current solution account for access for more providers with no added fees? Can it integrate with medical devices and EMRs? Does it have easy scalability grouping providers into departments? Does it have data analysis capabilities so you can maximize efficiency and experience? Your proactive telehealth plan should account for practice growth without breaking the bank or causing disruptions in scheduling or managing your day.

Reactive:

I need to see my patients so I'll just Facetime them.

Proactive:

The solution we first chose was not purpose-built for physicians and was not HIPAA-compliant. We're concerned about the risk. How can we do better for our staff and our patients? A free solution limits how efficient I can be and how much additional revenue I can generate that would more than pay for a more robust solution at nominal cost.

The Plan:

There are many free solutions out there at first glance, when the pressure to pick a platform is on, could look like a great option. Free, though, does not necessarily mean effective. Perhaps a solution with better scheduling capability or data efficiency capability helps you see more patients or generate revenue that can more than pay for a solution. Regardless of cost, especially if you are thinking long-term adoption, it is imperative that the solution be HIPAA-compliant and scalable. Equally as important, the solution should be easy to use for physicians and patients so that neither fall back on high-risk options like Facetime. Patient privacy and physician satisfaction should be top of mind when picking a telehealth solution for your hospital.

Reactive:

We'll worry about cost later. Right now, we just need something in place to get through this crisis.

Proactive:

Let's pause and really calculate our return on investment. What value is my telehealth solution providing to my hospital or practice? Just because it's free are we missing opportunities for efficiency, cost savings, and revenue gains.

The Plan:

A telehealth solution that was specifically created for healthcare knows that metrics are key to long-term success in a hospital or large practice setting. Adopt a solution that provides you with all the answers you need to show ROI. How many visits, how many cancellations, time of average video call, and many other benchmarks and data points that can demonstrate what's working and not working in your telehealth program. Your solution should be a partner in providing quality healthcare not a hindrance or afterthought.

Reactive:

I need to meet the need of our practice shut down to reduce infection rates.

Proactive:

Telehealth can be a valuable, long-term revenue generator and improve patient outcomes.

The Plan:

Instead of thinking about your telehealth platform as meeting one need, although an important one, to care for patients remotely in a pandemic, consider the future. Is your platform scalable for a full virtual care program? Can you leverage that platform for additional revenue generating programs to address chronic conditions, rural care needs, monetizing patient messages and reduce readmissions in your community and the surrounding areas?

How are you preparing for the future of healthcare? If you are concerned that your solution isn't right for you, we'd be happy to connect to discuss what you need in place to create a more proactive approach to telehealth and a full virtual care program, please contact us

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