



## Telehealth and Nephrology Care

Changes in the way that healthcare is delivered during this pandemic are needed to reduce staff exposure to ill persons, preserve personal protective equipment (PPE), and minimize the impact of patient surges on facilities. Healthcare systems have had to adjust the way they triage, evaluate, and care for patients using methods that do not rely on in-person services. Telehealth services help provide necessary care to patients while minimizing the transmission risk of COVID-19, to healthcare personnel (HCP) and patients. The use of Telehealth technology is widely accepted throughout the medical community. Having now existed for over a decade, Telehealth has taken medical practices by storm and changed the way that patients visit with their providers. With a few clicks of a mouse, patients who previously had difficulty accessing providers because of distance or schedule can now complete visits with their healthcare provider from the comfort of their own home. Telehealth in Nephrology care can make a world of difference when it comes to care coordination, remote monitoring, and follow up care.

### **The Place of Telehealth in Nephrology Care:**

#### **1. Care Coordination**

Telehealth has long been used as a means of care coordination between all of the providers a patient is seeing. This is especially true for patients battling multiple chronic diseases. Telehealth in Nephrology care falls under this wide umbrella of care coordination due to the fact that Nephrologists treat patients battling Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). By utilizing telehealth as a means to communicate and coordinate with the patient's other providers, Nephrologists can make sure they are doing nothing but offering their Chronic Kidney Disease patients the quality care they deserve. This also takes the burden off of the patient in terms of having to remember and communicate each bit of information from each of their providers. Depending on how many providers that the patient is seeing, this can add up very quickly and cause important details to go untold. Telehealth in Nephrology care helps to make sure the patient only has to worry about taking care of themselves, while all of their providers communicate seamlessly about the best plan of action.

## 2. Remote Patient Monitoring

Regarding Telehealth in Nephrology care, Remote Patient Monitoring is one of the most important features and tools that a Nephrologist can utilize for their patients who qualify. Remote patient monitoring allows for the delivery of healthcare services using advanced monitoring technology to collect data and send it back to the provider. Telehealth in Nephrology Care allows RPM for patients who are eligible. For example, Remote patient monitoring can be used when offering remote home dialysis. RPM monitors and tracks the vitals and progress of patients without that patient having to travel for in-office treatment. This is especially useful for patients battling end-stage kidney disease as leaving the comfort of their home can prove more difficult. This factor of Telehealth in Nephrology care can improve compliance with dialysis and keep patients connected to their providers where they feel the least amount of inconvenience.

## 3. Follow Up Care

A common struggle for any provider is getting patients to show up for their follow-up care appointments. Telehealth in Nephrology care is the solution to no-shows and increasing compliance with follow up care. This is vital for dialysis patients and those managing Chronic Kidney Disease. Follow-up care can be overwhelming for patients who are eager to be done with their providers, but it includes multiple visits to Nephrologists who are often far away. How does Telehealth in Nephrology care improve compliance? It does so by offering patients an alternative visit option that keeps them from having to interrupt their busy schedules or travel out of the way. Not only is this a positive impact on patients who are now receiving the follow-up care that they need, but it improves the number of payments that a nephrologist receives. More follow-up visits equal an increase in billing for follow-up care.

Telehealth in Nephrology care should no longer be avoided. While there will always be a need for in-person visits, especially in regard to Nephrology, Telehealth offers tools that help Nephrology providers and their patients achieve goals that were previously unattainable. With simpler care-coordination, Remote Patient Monitoring, and improvements in follow-up care, there is no question that there is a place for Telehealth in Nephrology care.



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