



3 GLOBAL TRENDS THAT MAKE IT CRITICAL TO GET TELEHEALTH RIGHT



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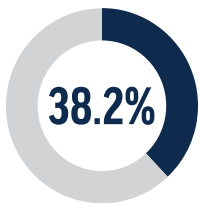
INTRODUCTION

As the demands on healthcare organizations continue to evolve, three emerging trends are changing the way care is delivered and will have clinical, operational, and financial implications for every practice:

- 01 Increased concern for social equity in healthcare
- 02 The rise of performance-based healthcare models
- 03 The growth in competition from non-traditional healthcare venues

While each of these trends presents unique opportunities and challenges, together they are altering the provider-patient relationship and accelerating the need for high-quality hybrid services that combine telehealth and in-person care.

Concurrent with the rise of these trends, the global use of virtual care continues to grow.



In the United States alone, Frost and Sullivan estimates that the telehealth market will display staggering seven-fold growth by 2025, resulting in a five-year compound annual growth rate of 38.2%.¹

Globally, a financial stimulus package issued by the German federal government in 2020 included a €3 billion investment package to strategically expand the digital and telehealth structure in German healthcare.² And countries around the world including China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have seen a rise in the use of telehealth.

This creates an uncommon set of circumstances where healthcare organizations that get telehealth services right can set themselves up for near-term growth and sustained success.

From a **clinical** perspective, the ability to provide professional and satisfying virtual care enables good outcomes, more patient options, and increased patient retention.

Operationally, making it easy for staff to connect and communicate clearly with patients enables additional and more frequent touches without increasing staff or building new locations.

The **financial benefits** go beyond the ability to see more patients, more frequently, enabling practices to cut costs and create new revenue streams.

Healthcare organizations that have already embraced telehealth services have a distinct advantage in the wake of these emerging trends and changing patient and practitioner expectations. But whether you have an extensive telehealth program or are still early in your adoption, creating a high-quality virtual communication experience is key to patient satisfaction. This white paper illustrates how to ensure that as you take advantage of these three trends, your telehealth services are delivered with the audio and video clarity that increases patient satisfaction and helps you achieve a reputation as a provider of choice.



TREND #1

PROVIDING ACCESS TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

As concern around social equity in healthcare increases, improving access to care is an important initiative for healthcare organizations around the world.

Many residents of rural and urban areas lack access to primary care because it doesn't make economic sense to build and staff a facility near to them. Even those who live near healthcare services may not be able to access them because of mobility, age, or the need to arrange for childcare or transportation. These individuals are still vulnerable to illness and chronic conditions and may rely on the closest emergency room when they need care. The resulting care is costly for everybody and since patients can't always make it to follow-up appointments, this can result in poor outcomes.

Telehealth care helps you extend your practice to these underserved patients, without having to open and staff additional offices. Convenient virtual health visits can keep chronic conditions under control, resolve minor issues, and improve quality of life for those with physical or geographical barriers to health.

“Telehealth has furthered social equity in a number of ways. Patients feel more comfortable connecting from their homes, and worry less about judgment of health issues that often come with a stigma.”

-Lauren Fields, MBA, BSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer, ARcare

As **the movement for Social Equity of Health³** gains momentum, you can build on your practice's reputation by bringing quality care to marginalized populations.

Key to effective virtual care: Ease of use for clinical team

- Telehealth appointments are most effective when your devices can automatically adjust for lighting, sound, and even movement—that way your care provider can simply focus on building a relationship with the patient.
- Clear audio and video helps providers avoid poor virtual communications experiences, which can leave patients frustrated and affect their their willingness to schedule future appointments.
- Audio and video devices compatible with your virtual meeting software frees the medical team from IT headaches that can negatively affect patient care.



TREND #2

DELIVERING ON PERFORMANCE-BASED HEALTHCARE

The rise of performance-based care models means increased time spent on improving and documenting clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction. Many of the medical services necessary for performance-based models (such as preventative care, post-operative follow-ups, routine care for chronic diagnoses, and mental health appointments) can be just as effectively delivered through virtual care appointments. This allows you to balance routine care with the need to optimize healthcare practitioners' time and keep costs in check.

Research by the American Medical Association (AMA) reported that 85% of physicians indicated that telehealth increased timeliness of care and 75% said that telehealth allowed them to deliver high-quality care.⁴

Replacing or augmenting costly in-office visits with more affordable virtual appointments can be beneficial for both patients and providers. A good telehealth initiative can increase the number of patients healthcare providers see throughout the day when compared to purely in-person visits. Remote visits also give you the ability to consult with distant specialists who would normally be geographically unavailable to the patients for an on-site examination. The quality of care is improved and, because they typically miss fewer appointments, patient outcomes can improve as well.

Another advantage of telehealth services is that patients become more engaged with their own healthcare thanks to the convenience and frequency of virtual care appointments. Engaged patients are more likely to keep appointments, stay current with prescriptions, follow provider recommendations, and take other actions to promote their own health.

Key to effective virtual care: Clear communication

- Avoid diminishing quality of care by using high-quality audio so that the patient can hear healthcare providers clearly.
- Ensure patient satisfaction by creating a virtual experience that is as effective and personable as the care they would receive in-person.
- Create experiences that feel natural and lead to good outcomes by providing practitioners with professional grade video devices.



TREND #3

OVERCOMING COMPETITION FROM NON-TRADITIONAL SOURCES

In its 2019 Benchmarking Report, the Urgent Care Association found that there were over 9,500 independent urgent care clinics in the US and 25 percent of their patients didn't have a primary care provider or a medical home.⁵ The rise of stand-alone clinics, boutique medical groups, and other non-traditional healthcare providers presents both a risk and an opportunity for your practice and its bottom line.

The risk is having your patients decide it's more convenient to take their healthcare issues to an independent clinic rather than working with you. But the opportunity is two-pronged: expanding your practice to those without an established primary care provider, and building stronger relationships with your existing patients, so you are always their first choice for care. Telehealth helps you do both while overcoming the perceived additional convenience of these competing providers.

Since telehealth services are cheaper and quicker to deliver than in-office visits, you can provide more touches for each patient. As the frequency of patient visits increases, you're better aware of their health and able to intervene before a situation becomes a crisis.

"Telehealth visits can expand care outside of traditional office hours to allow provider access 'just in time,' as our health, well being, and safety do not understand the standard 9-5."

-Melissa Evraets, RN, MSN, NE-BC
Vice President of Resident Care, Chief Nursing Officer

You're also building patient loyalty. A patient that you've built a trusting relationship with through convenient telehealth visits is more likely to make your practice their first choice for all of their healthcare needs. At the same time, you're growing your revenue base with the increased patient throughput and new billing opportunities enabled by hybrid services.

Key to effective virtual care: IT oversight

- Keep technology from intruding on telehealth experiences by using compatible equipment. This frees your IT team from the headache of trying to create a cohesive solution from disparate cameras, headsets, and platforms.
- Just like you arm new team members with the laptop or tablet they need to do their jobs, give health practitioners audio and video tools that enable high-quality virtual care.
- Simplify monitoring of telehealth equipment with a solution that offers device management from a single pane of glass.



A WORD ABOUT REGULATION

Many of the trends associated with telehealth services are occurring in highly regulated environments, which vary from country to country, state to state, and province to province. However, a common concern in the use of hybrid services, made up of telehealth and in-person care, is the ability to secure patient information, which—whether the regulation calling for security compliance is HIPAA, GDPR, or anything else—must be considered when choosing technology that enables the virtual side of hybrid healthcare.

CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING TELEHEALTH VIDEO AND AUDIO SOLUTIONS

High-quality, noise-canceling audio and video solutions turn telehealth appointments into rich and personal communication experiences where your providers can convey trust, competence, and empathy to patients, while capturing visual and non-verbal details that aid in assessment and diagnosis. Look for telehealth solutions that:

- Provide leading-edge camera and headset technology that includes high-definition video and high-fidelity audio**

PRO TIP: For more natural experiences, find a solution that minimizes external noise and distractions and delivers enhanced visual clarity by properly framing medical staff or even automatically tracking them as they move about the room to show x-rays or demonstrate physical therapy.

- Interoperate with your existing solutions and integrate seamlessly and securely into your broader IT environment**

PRO TIP: Enable smooth deployment for your IT team with solutions that work with your EMR, LIMS, and patient portal or CSP without extensive configuration headaches.

- Deliver premium quality and ease-of-use**

PRO TIP: Technologies that are certified for use with your video platform and are highly intuitive, improve effectiveness and provide good experiences for both providers and patients, who may be aging and unfamiliar with technology.

- Meet the specific needs of your individuals and group participants according to their workspace and workstyle**

PRO TIP: Matching the appropriate headset and webcam solutions to individual needs, and aligning conference room video solutions to the room size and use, makes a big difference in enabling quality experiences.

- Simplify IT management of all users and devices**

PRO TIP: Choose a solution with management software that lets your IT team track and manage all the video and audio solutions, no matter where they're being used, from a single management portal.



HOW CAN POLY HELP?

Established in 2018 from the merger of veteran audio and video experts Plantronics and Polycom, Poly has a 30-year history of expertise in audio and video solutions, consulting, device management, and healthcare grants assistance.

We can help you:

Provide quality, virtual patient experiences

High-quality audio and video and Poly innovations like speaker tracking and framing make virtual conversations well-lit and crystal-clear, and allow additional experts to be brought into the meeting for consultation.

Improve your clinical team's effectiveness

Poly frees your team to focus on patients by designing intuitive equipment for telehealth solutions. Products like headsets are designed for all-day wear so clinicians communicating with patients or surgical and diagnostic teams during procedures stay comfortable.

Make IT management easy

Poly offers an end-to-end portfolio of headsets, cameras, desk phones, speakerphones, and integrated meeting room systems that eliminate connectivity headaches and promote best-practice information security. Our video conferencing solutions work with all major video meeting platforms and telehealth provider solutions that support USB device connectivity.

Give your IT team all the visibility they need to manage, monitor, and maintain your Poly devices in a single pane of glass, including home office equipment.

Get help winning grants to expand your telehealth services

The [Poly Grant Assistance Program](#) has assisted medical institutions throughout the U.S. in finding technology funding for telehealth services. Our network of experts is here to help you through the grant process, free of charge—from identification and application to post-award administrative support.

Poly has a proven history of helping healthcare providers expand telehealth services to patients in need. Read the case study to learn how the Poly team connected Baptist Health Corbin with much-needed grant funding to better serve rural Americans.

Contact your Connection Account Team for more information.
1.800.800.0014 ■ www.connection.com/Poly



1, 2: Frost & Sullivan, Telehealth to Experience Massive Growth with COVID-19 Pandemic, Says Frost & Sullivan, May 2020
3: Healthpeople.gov, Social Determinants of Health, February 2022
4: AMA, In 2022, moving beyond telehealth to digitally enabled care, January 2022
5: Fierce Health, Now more than 9,000 urgent care centers in the U.S., industry report says, February 2020