

Telehealth
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Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, Senator Kelly, Representative Pavalock-D'Amato, and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee: My name is Erica Lyons, and I am an APRN at Generations Family Health Center's Willimantic site. Generations is a Federally Qualified Community Health Center that provides medical, dental, behavioral health and support services in eastern Connecticut. This part of Connecticut is extremely rural and lacks public or reliable transportation systems.

I have seen numerous positive outcomes from use of telehealth. To name some:

- Incredible productivity, almost zero no-shows, people actually getting connected with care
- Completely resolves the transportation issues we face every day, actually getting patients the care they need without the significant cost and extreme delay and struggle with Veyo, Med Cab, etc.
- Keeps our vulnerable patients safe and limits their exposure (and MOST of our patients have many co-morbid conditions AND are part of communities that have faced much higher rates of COVID exposure, morbidity and mortality). Many of our patients strongly prefer TeleHealth options.
- Allows for our busy working patients and parents to actually take care of their own health! They do not have to find childcare or take time off from their hourly rate job. They can speak with a provider in between work or with their family, providing convenience and access to care that was not available to these patients previously.

I have SO many patients who are benefitting from TeleHealth. Below are just a few:

- Patient with COVID-19 who I was able to coordinate via telehealth keeping them and our clinic safe, while checking in more regularly than they would be able to if coming to the clinic; Spanish speaking without transportation access. Able to monitor safely at home while helping her stay quarantined.
- 85-year-old patient in wheelchair with many high-risk conditions, always very difficult to get her to clinic with transportation, significant stress, often a whole day affair of waiting

for rides and to be picked up, now able to safely monitor conditions and discuss in telehealth visits – mood/depression improved, diabetes and HTN more stable.

- Patient who could never make it to appointments due to work schedule, chronic no-show, needing HCV treatment and also working to keep up with BH services, finally able to manage and keep appointments via telehealth as able to do in between work schedule. Consistently in counseling, on medications, completing HCV treatment and stable.
- Patient who relapsed on heroin and via telehealth able to connect regularly and get back into rehab and treatment. This patient has no car, no transportation, and very inconsistent with in-clinic visits, however, always able to be reached by phone. Without telehealth I would not have been able to get her into care.

ALL of my patients who rely on Veyo/MedCab have had improved attendance, medication adherence, and outcomes due to TeleHealth options.

ALL of my patients with co-morbid conditions, who absolutely should and want to remain isolated to prevent risk of COVID-19 exposure are extremely thankful to be able to continue their primary care from the safety of their home. Patients with significant cardiac disease, Type 1 and 2 diabetes, autoimmune disorders, cancer.

Many of my young adult patients who consistently no-showed appointments due to chaotic work schedules and family, are finally able to have consistent visits with me via TeleHealth, and we are actually making progress in their health concerns, acute and preventative.

I am more productive than I have EVER been at Generations.

My patients are ALL thankful to have Telehealth as an option. Many do not want to come physically to the clinic until there is a solid vaccine, and many have faced extreme barriers coming to the clinic even pre-pandemic due to lack of transportation, lack of childcare, lack of time-off or flexibility from their jobs, or mental health concerns that make it difficult to keep a schedule. By calling them, we are able to connect even if they may forget to come to the clinic.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Providers like me have had tremendous success with telehealth, and we need to make access this kind of healthcare permanent so that we can provide healthcare services to all of the residents in Connecticut.