

Telehealth

90%

of US adults have at least one desktop or laptop computer, smartphone, tablet, or media streaming device in their home.¹

DEFINITION OF TELEHEALTH

Telehealth refers to health care providers using telecommunications methods, such as electronic and audiovisual tools, to deliver clinical services. As computer and mobile device usage increases, telehealth will become a more common type of health care delivery. There are four modes of telehealth: live video, store-and-forward, remote patient monitoring, and mobile health (mHealth). The modes that this infographic will reference are remote patient monitoring and mHealth.² Regarding pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), telehealth specifically refers to the delivery of PrEP-related clinical services to prevent HIV.

Benefits of PrEP Telehealth



Increase PrEP access for those most vulnerable to HIV who may not otherwise have access due to 1.) social stigma related to receiving in-person HIV prevention services, 2.) distance from the closest PrEP provider, and/or 3.) a lack of reliable transportation.



Reduce PrEP delivery barriers related to PrEP provider shortages

STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT PREP TELEHEALTH

When implementing PrEP telehealth in clinical settings, it is important to consider factors such as: the organization's Internet broadband access, laws, regulations and insurance reimbursement policies that address telehealth in your state, staff training on the new technology, potential partnerships with organizations that will support the implementation, and marketing strategies for the new technology.^{3,4} Use the questions below as a starting point in strategizing how you will implement PrEP telehealth.

01

Internet Speed

- What is the minimum bandwidth and broadband speed needed to use your PrEP telehealth technology to its fullest capacity?
- What telehealth applications are compatible with local broadband speeds?

02

Laws and Insurance Reimbursement Policies

- How will you ensure that your telehealth platform is HIPAA compliant?
- What are the state laws and regulations that affect online prescribing?
- What telehealth services are reimbursable in your state by private insurers and programs like Medicaid and Medicare?

03

Staff Training

- How will you measure staff readiness and willingness to implement PrEP telehealth?
- How will you train staff on the new technology and what resources will you establish for technical assistance?
- How will you promote the new technology to your patients (e.g., social media campaign, posters, pamphlets, etc.)?

04

Potential Partnerships

- What organizations can you partner with to increase the chance of success for the PrEP telehealth implementation (e.g., local laboratories, pharmacies, etc.)?
- In what specific ways will you partner with each of these organizations?

SUCCESSFUL PREP TELEHEALTH MODELS

TelePrEP: In February 2017, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) launched TelePrEP to address rising HIV diagnoses in their state and to engage rural communities that may not live close to a PrEP provider and/or have reliable transportation. By using the Vidyoo® application and collaborating with local laboratories, pharmacies, the Signal Center for Health Innovation, and University of Iowa Health Care, IDPH created a TelePrEP clinic model. Patients have a virtual visit with a PrEP provider via Vidyoo® and then have their PrEP-related labs drawn at a local laboratory. Once the lab results are sent to the provider and it is determined that the patient can continue PrEP, they can pick up the medication at a local pharmacy or it can be sent to the patient via mail delivery.⁵ More information on TelePrEP can be found at <https://www.prepiowa.org/teleprep>



PlushCare, the urgent care telehealth platform available in 31 states, launched their availability of PrEP services in November 2017. After enrolling in PrEP services with PlushCare, patients have a virtual visit with a PlushCare physician and have lab tests ordered. A 90-day prescription for PrEP medication is sent to the patient's preferred pharmacy once the labs are reviewed. PlushCare can send reminders when patients need to have repeat lab testing or have another visit with their PlushCare physician in order to continue PrEP.⁶

CONCLUSION



PrEP telehealth can be a powerful tool to engage populations who may not live close to a PrEP provider, have reliable transportation, or have concerns that they may face social stigma when taking PrEP. It can also alleviate difficulties with access to PrEP when there are local PrEP provider shortages. When implementing PrEP telehealth in clinical settings, there are several key considerations such as (but not limited to) internet speed, local laws and insurance reimbursement policies around telehealth, potential partnerships to make the implementation most successful, and marketing strategies for the new technology. There are models of PrEP telehealth in the field where this innovative tool is being used to change the landscape of PrEP delivery for those with little to no access to health care.

References

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