



# EXTEND TELEHEALTH

“Not only does telehealth and virtual care help in saving lives but it also aids in reducing unnecessary emergency room visits.



During a telehealth call with one of my regular patients, I noticed right away that she did not sound well. Within minutes she became unresponsive and using my other phone I called 911. I was finally able to to illicit a response minutes before the first responders got to her door.

My patient was taken to a local hospital, where she was admitted to the ICU with a diagnosis of ketoacidosis. I called the hospital daily to check on her status, and after more than a week she was discharged home. My case manager was the first to speak with our patient and when she learned the patient had no memory of the events, filled her in about being on a telehealth visit with me, and my having called 911 when she became unresponsive. On my next telehealth visit with her a few days later, with great emotion, she thanked me for saving her life.

I know for a fact that had this been a routine in-person medical visit, and my patient was not feeling well, she would have been a no-show, something which occurs on a frequent basis with our patients usually due to their inability to arrange transportation to get to the clinic. That being the case, and as someone who lives alone, my patient would have lain in her home unresponsive without anyone knowing and her outcome would have been a completely different one.

Telehealth and virtual care need to continue to be a regular part of health services, not just during the pandemic, but beyond. It is a vital component to taking care of our most underserved and at-risk patients. Not only does telehealth and virtual care help in saving lives as exemplified above, but also aids in reducing unnecessary emergency room visits. This added level of care continues to make a positive impact on patient health and safety.

**DENISE SCHOLZ, NURSE PRACTITIONER**  
LIFELONG OVER 60 HEALTH CENTER



“*If we are to continue to provide quality healthcare to our most underserved, we need to be able to do it in the most accessible manner possible and that means telehealth.*”



Telehealth/virtual care is an essential tool, especially for our at-risk patient populations. It makes it easier for them to have access to the care that they need at the time they need it the most.

I had a patient who had always wanted to attend therapy sessions, however due to the nature of his work in construction he was always traveling throughout the Bay Area and there was no way for him to know if he would be nearby to make it to an appointment with me.

As the pandemic continued, his anxiety levels began to increase. However, thanks to the availability of telehealth, he was able to take the time he needed at his job site to make and keep his therapy appointments with me. The therapy sessions were so beneficial to him that it reduced his anxiety to a level where he no longer felt the need to continue his therapy.

Telehealth/virtual care needs to continue to be a permanent fixture in our health system. If we are to continue to provide quality healthcare through our community health centers to our most underserved, at-risk populations, then we need to be able to do it in the most accessible manner possible and that means telehealth.

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