

# FloridaMD

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# Telemedicine: A Win-Win for You and Your Patients

By Khalilah Filmore

Greetings, subscribers and readers of *Florida MD!*

We are living in the age of convenience and particularly in medicine - this has created a new and exciting frontier that many physicians are flourishing in. Early adopters of telemedicine and concierge medicine have long broken the shackles of depending on managed care companies and Medicare as sole revenue streams. Instead, they're creating diverse streams of cash income.

If you haven't tried using telemedicine with patients, you could be missing out on a key practice growth strategy. Telemedicine and other forms of internet-based communication can provide extra care for established patients, especially those suffering from chronic care conditions such as diabetes, congestive heart failure or high blood pressure. And like your peers, seizing on this opportunity in the "Age of Convenience" can not only grow your medical practice substantially, it can also boost your CV, profits and community standing.

## #CONVENIENCE

New research shows patients value the convenience of virtual office visits, even for bad news! Rhea Powell, M.D., M.P.H., is a general internist, clinical assistant professor at Thomas Jefferson University and primary author of "Patient Perceptions of Telehealth Primary Care Video Visits." Dr. Powell says the fact that some patients prefer video consultations over in-person exams opens up new opportunities for those that face barriers to medical care (Sweeney, 2017). One surprising finding from the study: Patients prefer to receive bad news via video in the privacy of their own home.

"This is somewhat contrary to the historical recommendations that we providers have been taught: that patients must come in to the office to receive serious news because we need to tell them face-to-face," Powell told AAFP News. (AAFP, 2017). Also of note, patients seem to have a good sense of which medical conditions require in-person evaluation and which can be effectively managed via telehealth. This is where an established physician/patient relationship and trust come into play.

## #CONCIERGEMEDICINE

As a primary care physician (PCP), you are tasked with managing a sizable patient load – PCPs average over 1,500 patients, typically meeting with 25 patients daily for only 10 to 15 minutes. For clear reasons, personalized attention is often lacking. A concierge practice, in comparison, keeps patient loads to fewer than 1,000, depending on your preference. This allows you to spend more time with patients.

In addition, as a concierge practice you can offer services such as 24-hour access, same-day appointments, low waiting room times, care coordination and house calls.

When seeing patients, be sure to point out the four following talking points when discussing why they should consider using your new concierge services: 1) increased availability and acces-

sibility with their personal physician, 2) easier communication, 3) longer appointments with ample time for their specific needs, and 4) highly qualified care coordination when needed. Carefully crafting care management programs that incorporate telemedicine can help reduce health care spending – all the while improving health outcomes and allowing you to see less patients and avoid dependence on insurance reimbursements. It's a win-win-win.

Please tell me if you are interested in providing or already provide telemedicine or concierge medicine to your patients! I invite you to submit your thoughts or questions by email with the subject line #PracticeTactics to [khalilah@wehelpdrs.com](mailto:khalilah@wehelpdrs.com) or visit [www.wehelpdrs.com](http://www.wehelpdrs.com). ■

*References available upon request.*



**COMING NEXT MONTH: Our cover story is about Celebration Orthopedics. Editorial focus is on Sports Medicine and Robotic Surgery.**

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