

TELEHEALTH PLATFORM SELECTION



Telehealth Platform Selection

Telehealth has become fully intertwined into the patient care delivery model. Separate workflows and processes for telehealth and inperson care are unsustainable because these types of encounters must be interchangeable.

Electronic Health Records and patient portals are ubiquitous; forming the foundation for how healthcare is delivered. Every aspect of the entire continuum of care, from scheduling, registration, documentation, orders, prescribing, referrals, billing/revenue cycle often hinges on the EHR. This toolkit addresses the critical considerations when navigating the complex decision making process for telehealth platform selection and EMR integration.



Telehealth Platform Committee

When selecting a platform it is important to have key stakeholders involved during the entire process. Decision making can be delayed if your committee is too large and unable to come to agreements but if too small you may not have the key stakeholders needed to keep the project moving forward and in alignment with the organizations strategy and directives. Make sure to have individuals that are able to help breakdown barriers, keep the project moving, and support subject matter experts with task execution.

Committee Participants

- Executive Suite/Senior Leadership
- Subject Matter Experts
 - Project Management
 - Technology
 - Application
 - Clinical (Providers, Nurses, and Support Staff)
 - Operations (Site/Office Management)
 - Financial (Billing, Reimbursement)
 - Legal/Regulatory
 - Patient Stakeholder representative

Committee Charter

- Establish and document roles and responsibilities
- Set goals and objectives and how they will be evaluated
- Develop a timeline that includes milestones
- Determine how to receive and address feedback



Telehealth Needs Assessment

One and Done? One platform may not meet all of your needs. Is the organizational directive to establish a telehealth standard through a single platform or have a preferred platform and access to others? What tolerance is there to adopt more than one platform to provide the best services to ALL patients?

Quick fix? Are you looking to meet short-term goals in response to a crisis or in it for the long haul? Cost is always a factor and something to consider when establishing the contract length with a vendor.

Show me the money? Reimbursement rules and regulations are ever changing. It is important to adopt a platform that is appropriate and flexible with a vendor that will be an agile partner. Will the benefit of telehealth outweigh the costs of implementation and ongoing technical support for providers and patients?

Past - Present - Future. Creating a digital library is a great way to determine what applications you have, if you are using them to their fullest and if you have duplicate silo initiatives. Document current state, what is being asked, and what it will take to get there.

Questions to ask include, but not limited to:

WHO - will integrate, implement, support, and use the application? Who else will be impacted by the implementation? Is there capacity within existing systems?

WHAT - is the current state and what are you trying to achieve? What are the needs vs wants? What are the priorities?

WHEN - do you want or need to start?

WHY - are you choosing a telehealth platform? Do you have current applications that could meet your needs?

HOW - will you engage, train, and support users and patients, meet your goals and timelines, and inspire adoption. Will you need to bring in a third party to support the initiative?

Telehealth Platform

The investment of hundreds of thousands to hundreds of millions of dollars for a comprehensive EHR that includes an embedded telehealth platform cannot be ignored when selecting and scaling a telehealth solution. No one questions the importance of integration, but does an EMR always offer the optimal solution when evaluating what telehealth solution is best for patients, providers and everyone.

EMR first or EMR Only? An EMR embedded solution may not meet all needs, some may be using a niche product and not the EMR to document patient care.

Potential pros and cons of an EMR integrated telehealth solution:

Pros

- One application to log into
- Streamlined workflows and data collection
- Can simplify scheduling and billing
- Decreased technology required
- More cost effective than purchasing and supporting multiple platforms
- Easier patient access via a patient portal

Cons

- Product limitations
- Reduced access due to stronger internet connection need for video
- Restricted access to only groups using the EMR
- Increased challenges/barriers for collaboration with external organizations without heavy and expensive customizations



Telehealth Platform Evaluation

- Consult with other organizations - the best way to avoid mistakes is to learn from others. Consult references for recommendations, feedback, and best practices. Research other possible organizations to contact since vendors usually provide their top referrals.
- Establish evaluation criteria - determine key requirements to assess and rank multiple platforms, e.g.
 - HIPAA Compliance
 - Cost
 - Ease of use
 - Compatibility
 - Browser/Device compatibility
 - Separate devices
 - Audio/Video protocols
 - EMR integration
 - Multiple languages
 - Consent forms
 - Scheduling
 - Appointment reminders/notifications
 - Waiting Room
 - Payments
 - Application support
 - Group calling (3rd party, e.g. interpreter, specialty consult, caregivers)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Telemedicine Platform Comparisons											
2	Feature/Criteria											
3	Cost (Per Month Per Provider)	Free	\$42	\$2/visit (\$100/month CAP during COVID)	\$207 - paired with appt reminders, mobile forms, 2way text	\$130 - paired with appt reminders, mobile forms, 2way text, online scheduling	Free	\$20 (\$240/year)	\$200	\$4.50/user/month	Have not yet made vendor contact	Have not yet made vendor contact
4	Limits?	None	None	None	None	None	40 mins/call	None	No	No		Unlimited
5	Browser Compatible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
6	Chat	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes		
7	Mobile App	No	No	Yes, HEALOW	No	No	Yes for us	Yes for us	Yes	Yes		No unless enterprise
8	Can you use on a separate device?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
9	Integrates with eCW (and cost)	No	No	Included	Included	Included	No	No	No	No		?
10	SD/HD Video	SD	HD	?	HD	HD	?	HD	HD	SD		?
11	HIPAA Compliant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Teleconsent Form	No	Yes (add-on)	Yes	Yes, Forms	Yes	No	No	?	No		Yes
13	Scheduling/Reminders	No	Yes	Yes, 1 (auto)	Yes, normal + 30 mins and upon start	Yes, 15+30	No	No	No	No		Yes
14	Patient Queue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		Yes
15	Waiting Room	No	Yes	No	Yes, Unique links	Yes, Common	No	No	Yes	No		Yes
16	Multiple Staff Interactions	No	Yes	No, future	Yes, Guest links max 6	Yes, only in pract	No	No	Yes	Yes		Yes
17	Custom Branding	No	Yes	No	Yes, Logo only	Yes	No but masq number	No but masq number	Yes	Yes		Yes
18	Screen Share	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
19	Payments	No	Yes	Yes	No, Roadmap	Yes	No	No	No	No		Yes
20	Group Calling	No	Yes	Yes	No	No, coming soon	No	Yes, 3rd parties	Yes	Yes		Yes
21	Protocols Used?	OpenTOK	OpenTOK	OpenTOK	Twilio/WebRTC	Twilio	Twilio/WebRTC/VP8	Twilio/WebRTC/VP8	?	TEAMS		?
22	Support Comments	Email/Slow	Email/Chat	Yes, Standard eCitation Mgr/Email	Yes, Phone/CSM/Implementation Mgr/Email	Yes and manage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes, Email and Chat (enterprise version has phone)
				Can add third party participants with latest update but not sure when that comes out	Can also dial 3rd party for translator (audio) into call	Can call with audio and send link. Nudge. Easy to request features. Updated almost weekly now	"Push" as you call the patient, a link is sent that they open in their browser, no pre-connection. Nudge	3rd party support for interpreters, family members, etc. "Push" as you call the patient, a link is sent that they open in their browser, no pre-connection. Nudge. Warm handoff		Using Bookings App, calendar access shared, links are long and complicated, looks like can now enable SMS messaging (free until 2/2022)	Interpreters can be pulled into visits seamlessly	Show videos/articles while patients wait

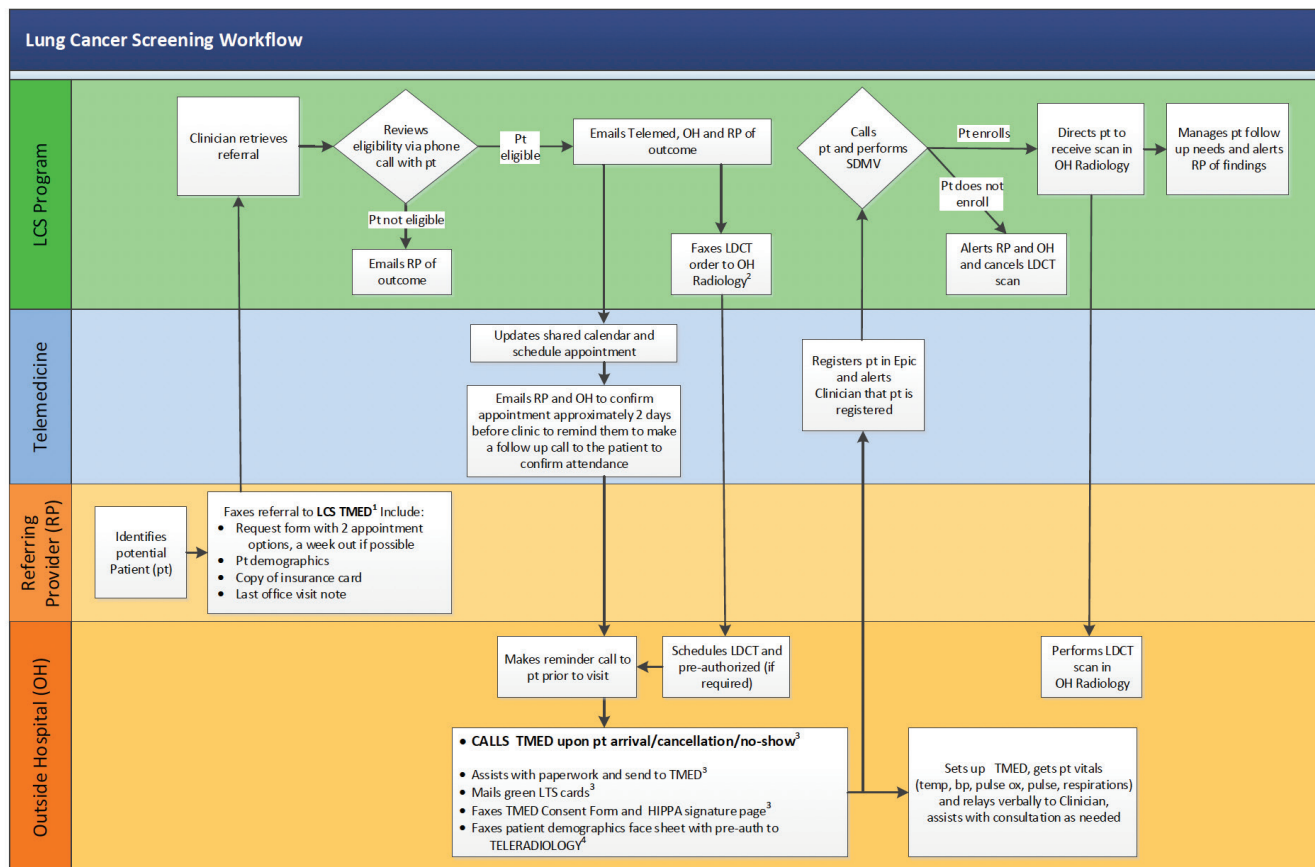


Telehealth Platform Assessment

- Analysis - once all evaluation criteria has been gathered the committee will need to review and score platforms
- Ranking - find your top three platforms and move forward with further evaluation, review and demos

Telehealth Barriers to Adoption

- Access to technology
 - Not all patients will have technology
 - Will your providers be consulting from home?
- Poor connectivity
 - Insufficient broadband access at home, may need to provide tools for both provider and patients
- Difficulty understanding application and technology
 - Develop a thorough training program and educational materials for all impacted team members and patients
- Application shortcomings
 - Important to manage expectations when educating end users of the applications capabilities
- Complicated workflows
 - Workflows should mimic in person visits, e.g. patient check-in should be completed by same role for in person and telehealth
 - Current workflows may need to be optimized for efficiencies
 - Create a standard template to document every step completed by support staff, clinicians, and patients to determine feasibility and opportunities for improvement





Things to Remember

- This is not an emotional decision
- Majority rules and not everyone's needs can be met
- Niche solutions may be needed
- Prioritize needs not wants, access is more important than peripherals
- Ease of use will encourage greater adoption than bells and whistles

