



news

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AHIMA Outlines Process of Implementing and Maintaining a Telemedicine Program

New toolkit provides overview of telemedicine benefits, challenges and best practices

CHICAGO – November 20, 2017 –To ensure the growing use of telemedicine to improve patient engagement and access to medical services is secure, compliant and effective, organizations implementing programs must align them with their enterprise-wide information governance initiatives.

In its new Telemedicine Toolkit, the [American Health Information Management Association \(AHIMA\)](#) outlines the evolving practice of telemedicine—the use of electronic communications and software to provide clinical services to patients without requiring an in-person visit—and provides necessary steps and requirements in implementing a program.

Veterans, patients in rural communities and those with mobility issues continue to look to their healthcare providers to implement telemedicine programs as a way to provide care when they cannot physically go to their physician or clinician’s office. Additionally, patients who have greater access to their physicians are relying more on telemedicine. Through the use of applications, smart phones and laptops, they can easily communicate with their physicians and receive prescriptions or test results without visiting their physicians’ offices. Aligning a telemedicine program with current information governance practices allows patient needs for trustworthy, reliable and secure data and information to be used to make strategic business and clinical decisions surrounding telemedicine.

“The value of telemedicine is in its ability to increase patient access to healthcare, making the proper care possible, in many cases, and more convenient in others,” said interim AHIMA CEO Pamela Lane, MS, RHIA. “This new AHIMA toolkit gives HIM professionals and healthcare providers the resources to assess their practice’s specific needs, align strategies with their information governance programs and understand the exact process and regulations that are needed to put a successful telemedicine program into action.”

The toolkit also assesses the potential benefits and challenges of telemedicine, addressing the timesaving, accessibility and patient engagement aspects of a telemedicine program in contrast

to the initial costs, user education and lack of face-to-face interactions that should be taken into consideration.

Additional features of the toolkit include:

- An extensive overview of the definitions of telemedicine and telehealth, including where the practice stands with veterans and other patient groups
- An emphasis on the importance of aligning a telemedicine program with an institution's information governance program, including a step-by-step guide on how to take a telemedicine program from its initial stages to its implementation
- A comprehensive analysis of requirements to consider in advance of telemedicine implementation, from legal policies to documentation and reimbursement considerations

The toolkit is free for AHIMA members and can be found online in AHIMA's HIM Body of Knowledge and on [AHIMA's web store](#).

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About AHIMA

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 103,000 health information professionals in the United States and around the world. AHIMA is committed to promoting and advocating for best practices and effective standards in health information and to actively contributing to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. AHIMA is advancing informatics, data analytics, and information governance to achieve the goal of providing expertise to ensure trusted information for healthcare. www.ahima.org