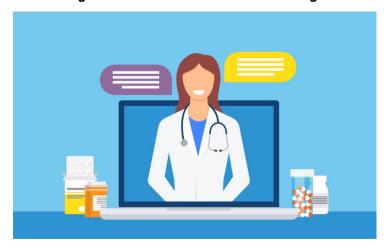# Future of Telemedicine and Telehealth - What you need to know

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Covid-19, the pandemic has changed the way the world functions. The pandemic instilled fear, restrictingmovement and making it difficult to visit a doctor for the regular check-up.

At a time like this, the world is waking up to realize the potential and power of online healthcare services. In the core of this realization for millions of people lies the advent and advancement of telemedicine software solutions and telehealth software solutions.

For eons, effective communication between doctors and patients was pivotal in building an effective relationship. But, at a time like the one we are living in right now, a telemedicine software facilitates effective communication between the two parties while helping the doctor gather relevant health and lifestyle information of the patient. This in turn is used by the doctors to disperse accurate counseling, diagnosis, and treatment like never before. McKinsey's recent estimate suggests that healthcare spending could see a $250 billion shift towards virtual care models. While the use of telehealth software solutions has seen a steady rise, with more than 60% of the healthcare institutions providing virtual care in 2016 to 76% in 2017; the true growth will be seen now, in a during-pandemic and post-pandemic era.

Telehealth Software Solutions and Covid-19

The sudden surge of pandemic and the restrictions and limitations that came with it expedited the world into looking at more scalable and sustainable telehealth software solutions. While other streams across the healthcare industry including the likes of reimbursements are seeing a satisfactory development, the focus now lies on how telehealth software solutions are developed. Owing to this, various telemedicine and telehealth software solution providers have seen rapid investments to respond to growing demands.

But what are the developments that we'll see in telehealth software solutions in the coming days and months? Let's find out:

- **A true contact-free experience**

As with any major occurrence in the world, social and societal practices change, either for the better or the worse. In the case of Covid-19, we can see a world that is afraid to touch anything that is exposed to the world. This exposure to various deadly bacteria and viruses is more prominent in hospitals and healthcare institutions, albeit them taking utmost care to maintain neatness and hygiene. To constrict any contact, we can see numerous technologically advanced checkpoints in hospitals too. Right from the registration process to examinations to diagnostic procedures, we can see a metamorphosis in the way medical services are executed.

- **Remote monitoring to be the norm**

Another aspect that is gaining traction in the medical landscape that is bound to spearhead the change is how virtual visits become more frequent. With more people being comfortable in using their smart devices, virtual visits can help doctors in giving out the requisite diagnosis to the patient right from the comfort of their homes. With remote monitoring becoming more frequent, caregivers can now offer real-time treatment and communicate with their patients more effectively. This includes everything from post-discharge care instructions, health coaching, counseling, appointment reminders through text, SMS, mobile alerts, or IVR. Data mining tools have also come to aid in offering emergency response during dire situations. Automated communication tools and telehealth software solutions can also improve healthcare institutions by having targeted interventions, improving adherence to medication regimens, and significantly reducing no-shows for appointments.

- **Decentralized care to be the future**

At a time when healthcare must be offered to every member of the society, telehealth software solutions are being developed away from the traditionally larger settings. This is being done to increase community-based offerings that are cost-effective as well. With healthcare institutions decentralizing their niche offerings, solutions are being offered through community extension services or through partnerships with emergency care centers. Decentralized offerings through telehealth and telemedicine software solutions also allow specialists to see different patients from around the world, offering them viable and effective care.

The future for technology-enabled healthcare models

The pandemic has laid bare the necessity of a revolution in the healthcare landscape and telehealth software technologies were adept in bridging the gap. However, these technology-led services must be further tuned to make them user-friendly. In simple words, these technologies must emulate and replicate the in-person experience that always exhumed warmth and care.

There is also a pressing need for an ideal synergy between telehealth software solutions and EHR platforms. Numerous EHR platforms lack the requisite interpretability between different technological platforms, causing numerous roadblocks in adopting the same. This hurdle can be overcome by consolidating all the fragmented web portals into a single interface that uses existing tools for scheduling and communication, thereby offering a better experience.

The adoption of viable and sustainable telehealth software solutions should be acknowledged as a certainty. While the world may be accustomed to the traditional medical experience, it is noteworthy to mention that telehealth was never meant to replace the conventional experience. It rather offers operational efficiencies that can ensure better care for the patients by rightly identifying various high-impact touchpoints. With different patient populations having varied preferences when it comes it digital engagement due to their demographics or socio-economic factors, the onus is on telehealth software developers to design the appropriate experience for the patients while remembering to address every need of the caregiver.