

10 Tips for Getting Started with Telemedicine

Considering adding telemedicine to your practice? Are you actively evaluating telemedicine vendors, but not sure how implementation will work?

If you've ever added any new technology or software solutions to your practice, you probably already know that choosing the right software solution is only the first step in the process. From there, you need to get all the equipment set-up, create your workflows, train your practice staff, and spread the news to your patients.

That [implementation process](#) can take a bit of time and work.

The good news is, implementing [telemedicine](#) doesn't have to be a headache-inducing process if you know the right questions and strategies to move forward. Here are the top 10 tips our eVisit team uses to get our telemedicine clients from sign-up to program launch.



1. Choose the right telemedicine solution for your practice.

The first step to getting telemedicine up-and-running your practice, is of course [selecting the right telemedicine solution for you!](#) How will you be using telemedicine? If you'll be doing live video visits with your patients, what features do you want from a telemedicine platform? Figure out your telemedicine use case and what is top priority for your practice, then choose the option that best fits your practice's needs.

2. Get all your staff on the same page.

You won't be able to build a successful telemedicine program without buy-in from all your staff. Whether you have a team of providers or just one physician who'll actually be doing telemedicine, it's very likely other staff will be involved in helping with your telemedicine program workflows. You may even want to involve your staff in your telemedicine software selection process. But at the very least, bring your staff into the fold once you've picked your software so you can bring them up to speed and include them in your trainings and workflow discussions.

3. Get your equipment set-up.

Depending on your telemedicine program, your equipment set-up might take some time (like purchasing data servers, telemedicine carts, mobile medical devices, etc), or it might be as simple as purchasing a [high-quality webcam online](#)! Figure out what equipment you'll need and research the best available options. Your telemedicine vendor should be able to give your equipment recommendations if you need them. If you have an IT expert on staff, you may want to delegate this task to them, or at least loop them in.

4. Get trained on the technology.

The step is crucial. The best telemedicine software solutions today are intuitive and user-friendly, but you and your staff still need to be trained on them. If your telemedicine software vendor offers training, figure out what kind of training package you'll need and block off that time to really learn the platform. Investing that time and energy up front will make the rest of the implementation process 100 times easier.

5. Read up on telemedicine policy in your state.

One of the tricky things about telemedicine, is that each state has different policies and requirements for how telemedicine should be practiced. Do a little research on [what your state medical board requires](#). Here are some questions to guide your research:

1. Can you offer telemedicine visits to patients in other states?
2. Do you need to get a patient's informed consent to do telemedicine? Does consent need to be verbal or written?
3. Can you write prescriptions based on a telemedicine visit?
4. Can you do a telemedicine visit with a new patient to establish a doctor-patient relationship? Or, can you only do telemedicine with existing patients?

6. Decide on your billing policy.

There are a few different factors you have to consider when deciding on your telemedicine billing policy. For instance, will you be billing through insurance? Will you be offering telemedicine visits as a cash service? Do you want to offer telemedicine to Medicare & Medicaid patients?

If you do want to bill through a patient's insurance, you'll need to do a bit of research into [the payer's guidelines for telemedicine](#). Medicare, Medicaid, and private payers all differ in what telemedicine services they'll cover and how to bill them.

If you're billing cash, just make sure you have the patient sign a form saying they're choosing not to use their insurance for any telemedicine visits.

7. Create your telemedicine program workflows.

Once you know your state telemedicine policy, your use case, and your billing policy, it's time to build your telemedicine program workflows! Meet with the staff that will be involved and map out your workflow:

1. If a patient requests a telemedicine visit, what happens next?
2. How is the visit scheduled or triaged?
3. Do you need to verify their insurance?
4. What does staff need to do to prepare for the visit?
5. What will the follow-up steps be after the visit to make sure all documentation and billing is processed correctly?

Walk through a couple example scenarios and decide what the steps will be and which staff member is responsible for what.

8. Create any paperwork/materials needed for your program.

After you have your workflow mapped out, and you know your telemedicine policy requirements, you should have a good idea what paperwork or materials you may need to create. This could be as simple as a telemedicine informed consent form or a waiver for patient to sign to say they're choosing not to use insurance for telemedicine.

9. Figure out how you'll provide tech support.

Even with an easy-to-use telemedicine platform, your patients are going to have some technical questions. Some telemedicine vendors will offer support service directly to your patients and handle all that for you. Or, you may need to train some of your staff to be able to troubleshoot or [handle basic tech support questions](#) from patients.

10. Build and launch your patient marketing plan.

The last step in implementing your telemedicine program is, of course, letting patients know about this exciting new offering! Chances are, many of your patients will be thrilled to do telemedicine visits. So, you just need to figure out the best way to get the word out and educate patients on how to get started. Our client success team gives our clients a mix of in-office brochures, posters, stickers, plus digital marketing materials – such as an email campaign, [social media campaigns](#), ads for your practice website etc.

Consider what works best for your patient population, and your budget, and then focus on those channels. Doing an email campaign, for instance, is a more affordable marketing strategy, but may not be as effective if you [don't have many of your patients' emails](#).

Ready to get started with telemedicine? For more advice and expanded tips on each of these steps, be sure to check out our upcoming webinar on [How to Build a Successful Telemedicine Program](#).

About the Author



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