6 PX Pitfalls
to Avoid With Telehealth

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The Future of Virtual Healthcare

Telemedicine and telehealth have been around for nearly two decades, but the adoption rate has been rather slow due to rigorous HIPAA regulations and health insurance policies. The rapid spread of COVID-19 disrupted the healthcare industry and forced providers and government agencies to rethink the way healthcare services are delivered.

The recent public health emergency caused the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to lift the enforcement of various HIPAA regulatory requirements around telecommunications. Since then, a massive market shift has taken place and will likely **change the way patient care is provided forever.**

Solutions are being put in place to ensure the privacy of data, insurers and government agencies are covering visits, patients are finally giving telehealth a try, and the new wave of caregivers are gravitating toward technology as a means of providing care.

According to Jackson Health, Telehealth is expected to grow by 27.5%, reaching $9.35 billion in 2021. It was estimated that the number of patients using telemedicine services will reach 7 million by year end with nearly half of the nation's private practices making the development of telemedicine services their number one priority in 2020.

For providers, telehealth is quickly becoming the norm, but simply having a telehealth offering isn't enough to stay competitive in a consumer-driven healthcare market. Employees and patients are operating in unchartered territories.

Staying connected to how patients feel about this modern approach to delivering healthcare services, especially in times of crisis, is critical for leading and learning. Specialty practices and health systems that make efforts to continuously improve the virtual care experience will be far less likely to lose patients to new market entrants and digital care market veterans.

The following 6 pitfalls must be avoided to pave the right path forward with telehealth.

In this eBook, the Telehealth 6 PX Pitfalls:

1 Not having a feedback loop in times of change

2 Forgetting to foster relationships with virtual patients

3 Avoiding data just because things are "out of the ordinary"

4 Providing inconsistent digital care experiences

5 Not recognizing virtual care personnel

6 Overlook opportunities for public praise

1 Not having a feedback loop in times of change

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Not having a feedback loop in times of change

Traditional care models are being disrupted and healthcare employees are rushing to figure out ways to accommodate patients safely. The pace at which these workers have adjusted has been nothing short of awe-inspiring but moving so rapidly has its costs. In a fast-paced environment, it's much easier to gloss over the small things that can make enormous impacts on patient experience.

The best thing providers can do during these fluid circumstances is learn as they go. Providers that offer or are considering offering telehealth should ask patients for feedback after each digital interaction. Comments should be reviewed closely to maintain a pulse on what matters most to patients and adjustments, even if small, should be made in real-time to better meet the needs of the next patient.

2 Forgetting to foster relationships with virtual patients

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Forgetting to foster relationships with virtual patients

As more and more patients take advantage of telehealth, healthcare professionals must find new and creative ways to bond with their patients.

Virtual experiences take out a portion of the human element, so here are a few things providers can do to show patients they care.
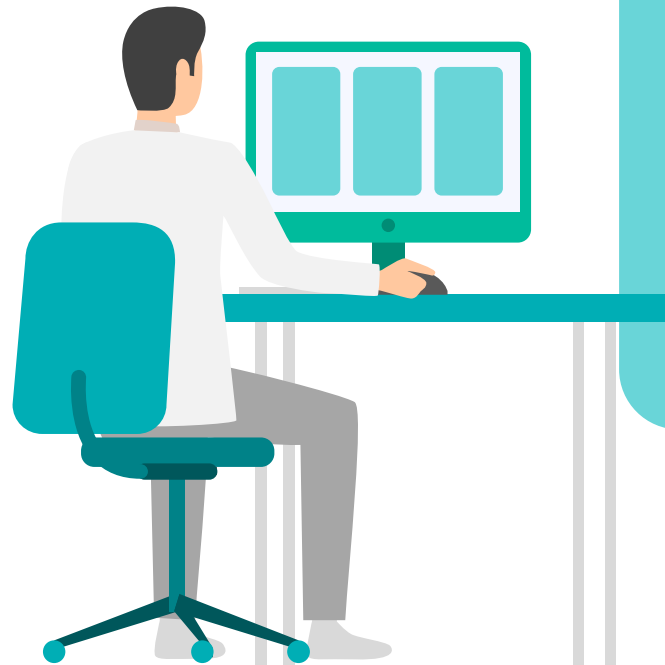
1

Give the patient undivided attention.

Be particularly mindful of facial expressions since the patient won't be able to see other body language signals. Avoid taking notes when possible during conversations so that patients don't have to wonder if their caregiver is multi-tasking.

2

Listen to patients and relate on a personal level.

Telehealth appointments are much faster than traditional doctor's visits. While the idea of saving a patient's time is perceived as a good thing, telehealth patients are more sensitive to the feeling of being rushed. Every interaction is an opportunity to form a relationship, so doctors and nurses shouldn't be afraid to ask about a patient's pet in the background and look for other things in common with the patient.

3

A simple outreach after an appointment can go a long way, even if it's automated.

Asking telehealth patients for feedback on their virtual experience shows genuine concern and allows the patient to privately express how they feel about the encounter. Upon receiving feedback, a friendly follow-up to acknowledge and apologize, if necessary, has the proven power to earn a patient's long-term loyalty and future patient referrals.

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10 Very likely

9   8   7

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3 Avoiding data just because things are out of the ordinary

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Avoiding data just because things are out of the ordinary

It's no secret that patient and caregiver needs are of greater magnitude than usual. Increased sensitivity due to stress, a rise in demand for healthcare services, and a limited supply of resources are likely to impact sentiment and skew data. Ignoring information that would normally drive business intelligence just because the world is temporarily living a new normal is a mistake. Healthcare systems around the world are in a period of active learning and impactful change cannot happen without data to guide the way.

Many providers are looking to national patterns and other data sources for decision making. While this is a great approach, not understanding how your practice fits into these patterns leaves a major gap. A provider's greatest learning should come directly from its own patients and workers.

Once that data is available, it then opens up the opportunity to benchmark against national trends.

4 Providing inconsistent digital care experiences

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Providing inconsistent digital care experiences

When it comes to in-person visits, the healthcare industry has centuries of practice under its belt. Healthcare workers have years of training embedded into their day-to-day lives and patients have prewired expectations in mind, regardless of which doctor they see.

Healthcare workers known for providing 5-star care during in-person visits may struggle to connect with patients and offer the same level of care virtually. The greatest influencer of the telehealth experience is the doctor or nurse on the other end.

When asking patients for feedback, providers must look at performance across individual healthcare workers, identify the ones that are doing a great job (and why), and use that information to thoughtfully coach caregivers that may be struggling. Doing so will help balance out the patient experience and ensure that every encounter with the practice is a great one, regardless of who is on the other end of the virtual visit.
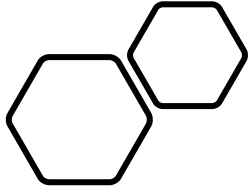
5 Not recognizing virtual care personnel

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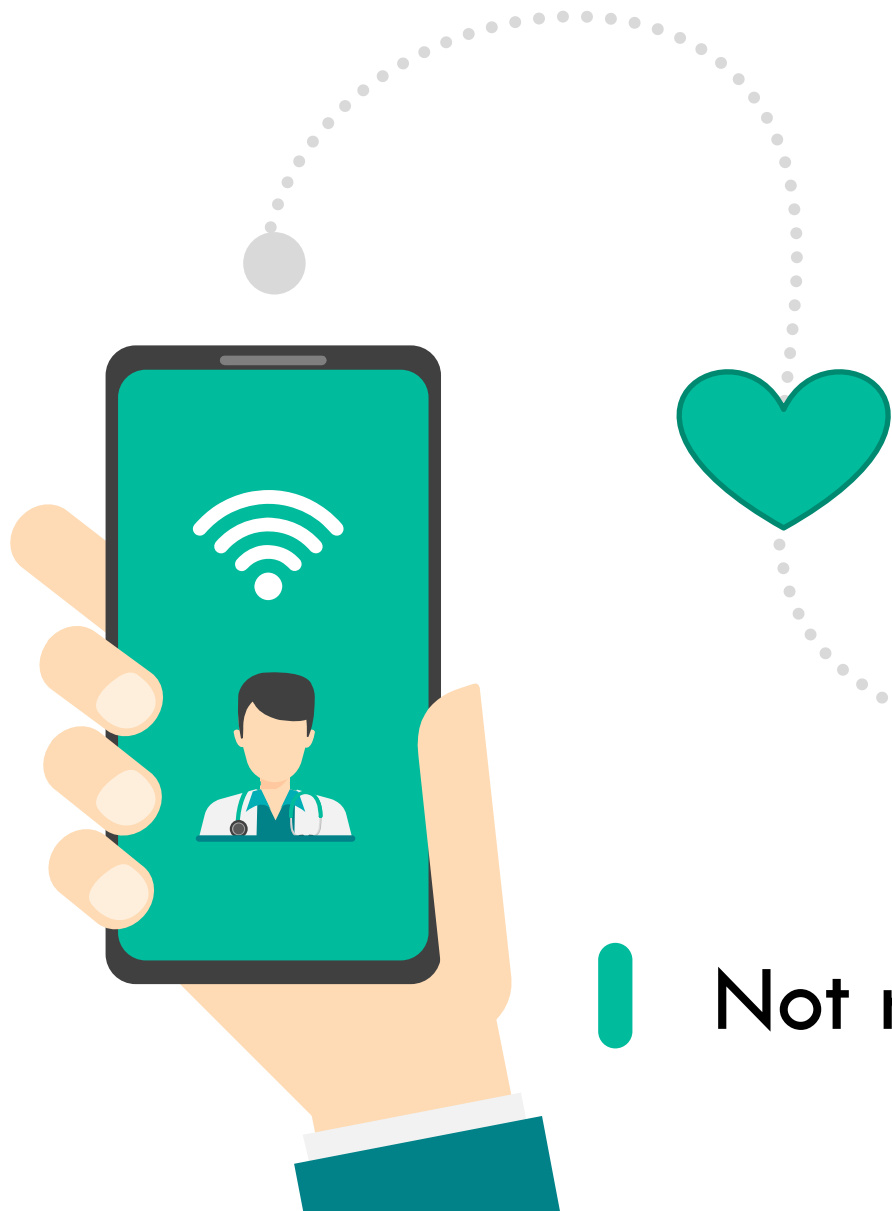
It's no secret that healthcare professionals are under a great deal of strain and responding as best as they can to growing patient demands. Now more than ever, these workers need gratitude and affirmation on how much they are valued.

Not recognizing virtual care personnel

Here are a few ways to recognize healthcare peers:

Start a weekly kudos email thread to share positive patient comments

Spotlight a different healthcare professional each week on your social media channels

Set aside 5 minutes during meetings or huddles to recognize caregivers

Reach out directly to healthcare personnel via phone or send a handwritten thank you note

6 Overlooking opportunities for public praise

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Overlooking opportunities for public praise

Healthcare providers are doing their absolute best to serve patients during this difficult time and it's not going unnoticed. Patients around the globe are singing the praises of healthcare personnel, as witnessed across news outlets and social media.

Providers should be proud of how their teams are rising to the occasion and not be shy about asking their patients to leave an online review for their practice.

As consumers search the web to find the best provider, a strong online reputation with comments specific to the adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic will be key to acquiring new telehealth patients.

An optimal way to gain 5-star online reviews during this time is via a gentle, automated review request following a private HIPAA-compliant patient feedback survey.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted life for so many individuals and businesses across the globe.

How we react and stand together in times of adversity will not only determine the future of healthcare organizations, but also the quality of care that is provided to our nation's patients and caregivers.

On behalf of the entire team at Listen360, thank you to all the healthcare workers, as well as the associations and partners supporting these remarkable individuals.

About Listen360

Listen360 helps healthcare providers **keep a pulse** on each telehealth, curbside, and in-person experience so they can **deliver humanized care** and **build long term relationships** with their patients.

Become the #1 provider. Start learning from every interaction today.

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