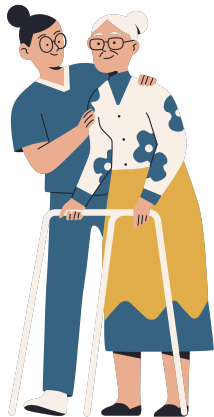


INTRODUCTION TO TELEHEALTH

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There are many challenges which contribute to the complexity and demands on our healthcare system. Examples include:

- our aging population, rising healthcare costs, increasing burden of chronic disease, workforce shortages, location of services, and the pandemic.

Telehealth can be used to help address these challenges in the healthcare system.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines telehealth as:

Telehealth is the delivery of health care services, where patients and providers are separated by distance. Telehealth uses ICT for the exchange of information for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and injuries, research, and evaluation, and for the continuing education of health professionals.



The main telehealth communication modes include:

1. Real time or synchronous communication (such as phone or video interactions)
2. Store-and-forward (S&F) or asynchronous communication (such as email)
3. Remote patient monitoring (which can be a blend of real time and S&F.

Telehealth interactions can be associated with the delivery of a clinical service, education and training, and/or for administration activities



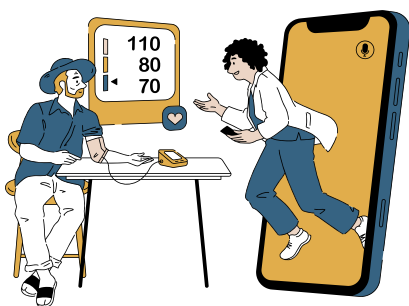
Telehealth can be used to share information between clinicians; or between clinicians and patients; or between a patient to health service provider (via mobile technology such as an app or peripheral device such as a blood glucose meter).

Telehealth services are being done in a broad range of settings including in hospitals, aged care homes, general (practitioner) medical centres, First Nations community health centres, in schools, and in the home of patients.

Due to availability of funding for telehealth services, the nature of services are multi-disciplinary.

Key benefits associated with the use of telehealth include:

- Reduced need for travel, improved chronic disease management, early detection and intervention of health conditions, emergency support in remote locations, workforce support and environmental benefits (reduce carbon pollution).



Telehealth is useful for supporting patients irrespective of physical location. Benefits for rural and remote patients include reduced need for travel; for patients in city locations, access to services may be limited due to physical or mental health conditions, costs, and lack of support. Telehealth has benefits for all the population.

Telehealth will not replace the need for in-person appointments. Rather it should be embraced as a complementary method of engaging and supporting the delivery of care of patients.