

# The Future of Telehealth for Cancer Care

Cancer Policy Roundtable  
November 19, 2020

Kristen McNiff Landrum

# Project Goals

1. Obtain direction from cancer patients and survivors about how to maximize the benefits of telemedicine
2. Obtain feedback from cancer providers to support, or offer refinements/ counterpoints
3. Create resources:
  - Toolkit for oncology practices on how to address patient barriers and increase the effectiveness of telemedicine visits
  - Toolkit for patients and families on how to prepare for telemedicine visits
4. Develop and disseminate policy recommendations from a patient perspective, and engage in policy advocacy

# Project Methods:

## *Rapid, pragmatic design*

- Steering Committee convened with responsibilities including:
  - Refine project approach and findings
  - Rapidly identify diverse focus group members
- Focus group guide developed and tested
- Focus group members recruited
- Six virtual focus groups convened
  - 5 using video, 1 audio only
  - 3-7 participants per focus group
  - Facilitated and recorded
- Themes identified across focus group transcriptions
  - Summary on subsequent slides
- Theme review with Steering Committee
- Structured survey of oncology providers

# Main Findings

- Telehealth has filled a critical gap for cancer care services during the Covid-19 pandemic
  - *“...the quality of the interaction between the doctor and the patient is not the same.... ”*
- Additional planning is required to ensure that telehealth is maximally beneficial, and to avoid unintended consequences

# Top Level Insights

- Oncology clinicians need to plan the visit types and scenarios that they consider appropriate for telehealth
- In-person visits are also needed for relationship building and reassurance
- Clear strategies and communication tools are needed to ensure successful telehealth visits that promote access to quality healthcare rather than exacerbate disparities
- Oncology clinicians need more training and familiarity with their telehealth platforms and better processes to prepare patients and caregivers for these appointments

# Top Level Insights (2)

- Patients need more transparency and predictability related to the out-of-pocket costs for telehealth
- Telehealth should be offered and covered to replace some cancer-related care in a way that is based on patient preference, provides access to care team members, reflects carefully planned timing and availability of services related to telehealth, and presents test results in a more timely manner
- Telehealth might be a mechanism to remove barriers and catalyze innovation in cancer care

# Provider Recommendations

- Ensure patient agreement that a telehealth visit is acceptable, balancing safety concerns with patient needs, recognizing that some patients prefer in-person visits
- Send a telehealth visit reminder by text, email, or phone call and ensure receipt of reminder
- Complete follow-up by providing a visit summary and scheduling next appointment, if appropriate
- Consider costs of telehealth for patients before making selections about visit types, and provide transparency and predictability for costs, if known
- Strengthen your video bedside manner

# Summary: Future Potential

- Telehealth should be offered and covered to replace some cancer-related health care
  - Based on patient preference
  - Offering access to care team members, not only oncologists/APPs
  - Timing and availability of services (e.g., tests and scans) related to telemedicine visits must be planned
- Telehealth can be a mechanism to remove barriers and catalyze innovation in cancer care
  - For example, in promoting multidisciplinary care planning; care coordination; second opinions; clinical trial participation; supportive care services; support groups



# For Additional Information...

<https://canceradvocacy.org/telehealth/>

# Special Thanks

- Steering Committee
  - Randall Broad, Doris Cardwell, Brad Glassel, Loretta Herring, Susan Leigh, Allison Rosen, Kelly Shanahan, Desiree Walker
- Project Team
  - Shelley Fuld Nasso, Elizabeth Goss, Brittani Harris, Kristen McNiff
- Funding Support: Pfizer