What's next

Healthcare

Solving telehealth inefficiencies that exacerbate physician burnout

Telehealth has been widely adopted and is here to stay. But telehealth inefficiencies add to physician burnout and awkward provider-patient encounters that negatively impact the relationship. Jared Pelo, MD, CMIO, Dragon Ambient eXperience at Nuance, provides insights into telehealth challenges and solutions to help overcome them.

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The COVID pandemic has triggered seismic shifts in how healthcare is delivered. Technology made it possible and practical to deliver patient care remotely while ensuring safety. Regulations changed and placed reimbursements for virtual visits on par with in-person exams. Telehealth platform companies became infused with investment, federal funds authorized in the CARES Act spurred adoption, and health systems moved forward with lightning speed implementations.

All of those factors came together in the dramatic expansion of telehealth services.

While providers and patients have embraced telehealth, and its place in healthcare delivery is likely permanent, documentation and workflow challenges that existed long before the pandemic remain.

The rise of telehealth – healthcare delivery model shifts quickly:
Telehealth visits in the U.S. have skyrocketed. Providers have reported 50x to 175x increases in the number of telehealth visits compared with pre-COVID-19 levels, and 57% of providers now view telehealth more favorably than they did before the pandemic. But the safety risks, financial pressures, and considerable reductions in patient volumes during the pandemic, plus the loss of 1.4 million healthcare jobs in April alone, only added to the severity of physician burnout and the urgency to reduce physicians' administrative workloads.

Telehealth challenges:
If physicians document during the encounter, their attention is divided between the computer and the patient. If they leave documentation until later, they are likely to forget some details of the encounter when completing the required documentation outside of clinical hours.

Telehealth also is rife with workflow inefficiencies: providers are performing tasks that nurses typically do during in-person visits; patients show up late because they can't find the link or have difficulty logging in, and scheduling must be done manually in two separate systems – the EHR and the telehealth or conferencing platform.

There can be a lot of dis-integrated tech-toggling too. Providers use various disparate telehealth or teleconferencing, EHR, and documentation solutions, each with workflows, security requirements, training levels, and interoperability that vary by organization and provider. Physicians need a collection of devices to conduct telehealth visits. They have to log into the telehealth platform on one device and use another to input information into the EHR.

However, telehealth's at-scale adoption clearly shows that the combination of need, urgency, and a will to overcome challenges can drive the rapid adoption of practical and useful innovations not only for safety and care delivery but for addressing physician burnout now.

Overcoming provider burnout:
How can telehealth visits become more efficient and satisfying for providers and patients alike, and address physician burnout? The answer can be found in advanced AI- and speech-driven ambient clinical intelligence (ACI) solutions deployed in health systems across the country.

The Nuance Dragon Ambient eXperience (DAX) is leading ACI innovation and adoption. The

DAX mobile application can be used for either in-person and telehealth visits with any EHR, video conferencing, or telehealth application. It reduces time spent documenting care and alleviates provider burnout by automatically capturing and contextualizing every word of the patient encounter in real-time at the point of care. DAX frees clinicians to focus on their patients, give them back time in their day, and empowers them to practice at the top of their license.

Nuance DAX is also integrated with Microsoft Teams and available to physicians from within their Teams workflow.

So forget the tech-toggling and reduce documentation burdens no matter how or where care is being provided. DAX turns the rhetoric of alleviating burnout and improving provider satisfaction and patient experiences into a practical day-to-day reality.

A related article originally appeared on KevinMD, the web s leading platform where physicians, advanced practitioners, nurses, medical students, and patients share their insight and tell their stories.

Tags:

More Information

	See the Dragon Ambient eXperience Discover how to reduce time spend documenting care for telehealth and in-office visits. Join a demo of the Dragon Ambient eXperience. Register now

About Jared Pelo

Jared Pelo, MD, is an Emergency Medicine physician and innovator. Dr. Pelo helps lead the ambient clinical intelligence team at Nuance where he is a Chief Medical Information Officer. Dr. Pelo's passion is the intersection of technology and healthcare. With a deep understanding of complex systems and artificial intelligence, he creates solutions that make healthcare more functional and efficient.

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