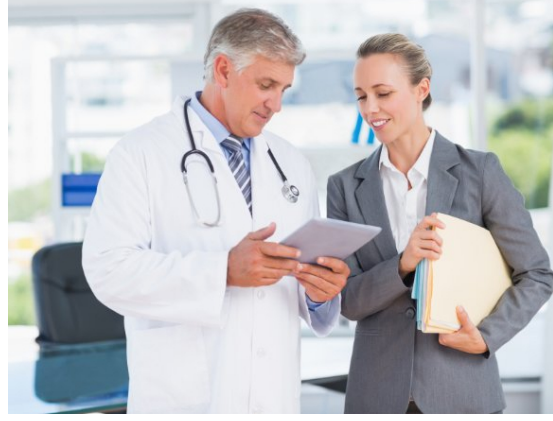


Hot Topics in Risk Management



Our Risk Management Team is here to help you minimize and mitigate Medical Professional Liability risk.



Patient Engagement in Telemedicine

The COVID-19 pandemic immediately and drastically increased the use of telemedicine. Physicians and their practices had little to no time to prepare and train. Instead, they adopted telemedicine techniques and platforms within days to weeks of COVID-19's arrival. Now, with a few weeks or months of telemedicine experience under their belts, physicians may not see a need for additional or formal telemedicine training. However, peer reviews and patient satisfaction surveys indicate there is a need to train physicians in enhanced engagement techniques and strategies. ⁱ

Based on patient feedback, researchers recommend the following for professional, high quality, and engaging telemedicine visits.

- Dressing professionally with a nametag or other identification: solid colors and neutral backgrounds.
- Minimizing background noise (rain, traffic, birds, dogs, office equipment, etc.) and background clutter.
- Setting the webcam at eye level and directly in front of the physician's face: head and shoulders centered.
- Looking into the webcam, instead of the patient's image on the screen, so patients feel the physician is speaking directly to them.
- Clearly introducing yourself with your name, professional title, and organization.
- Verifying the patient's full name, location, and birth date: ensure proper licensure for both the patient's and your locations.
- Confirming who is in the room with the physician and who is in the room with the patient: document who is present and the patient's authorization of their presence.
- Using professional, not colloquial, language.
- Pausing frequently for patient questions.
- Summarizing the findings and communications of the visit for the patient. ^{ii iii}

"This pandemic has highlighted the importance of broad, standardized telemedicine training of both our future and current [physicians and other health care professionals] . . . We want [them] to be adequately prepared to give high-quality visits to [the organization's] patients in this time of need and beyond."ⁱ

Rahul Sharma, MD, MBA, Professor and Chairman, Department of Emergency Medicine, and Executive Director, Center for Virtual Care, Weill Cornell Medicine, and Emergency Physician-in-Chief, New York Presbyterian-Weill Cornell Medical Center.

Online training in telemedicine applications and effective engagement of patients and families for various clinical specialties is available through state and national programs and organizations.

- American Telehealth Association (<https://www.americantelemed.org/>)
- Arizona Telemedicine Program (<https://telemedicine.arizona.edu/>)
- Southwest Telehealth Resource Center (<https://southwesttrc.org/>)
- Utah Telehealth Network (<https://utn.org/>)

ⁱ Nunes, F., Ahmad, N., Roberts, D., Metz, D. (2020). Research shows patients and clinicians rated telemedicine care positively during COVID-19 pandemic. *Penn Medicine News*. <https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-releases/2020/june/patients-and-clinicians-rated-telemedicine-care-positively-during-covid>

ⁱⁱ Contreras, C.M., Metzger, G.A., Beane, J.D., et al. (2020). Telemedicine: Patient-provider clinical engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. *J. Gastrointest Surg*, 24, 1692-1697. doi: [10.1007/s11605-020-04623-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11605-020-04623-5)

ⁱⁱⁱ Sharma, R., Nachum, S., Davidson, K.W., Nochomovitz, M. (2019). It's not just face time: Core competencies for the medical virtualist. *Int J Emerg Med*, 12, 8. (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12245-019-0226-y>

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