



RENAL MEDICINE ASSOCIATES  
TELEHEALTH CLINIC

# Telemedicine -Telehealth

## Expectations & Outcomes

A guide to understanding Telehealth/Telemedicine including its benefits, outcomes, and the expectations patients can have during their encounters

*Renal Medicines Associates' Telehealth Clinic is dedicated to the patient experience being, not only a fully informed experience, but beneficial to the patient in as many ways possible. It is this reason that we hope you find the following literature useful and informational before your upcoming telehealth appointment.*

## **Introduction to Telehealth/Telemedicine**

Here at Renal Medicine Associates, we are committed to offering the most comprehensive and advanced patient care as possible that treats kidney disease and the broad spectrum of other conditions that can accompany kidney disease, such as hypertension, fluid retention, anemia, hyperkalemia, polycystic kidneys and many, many more. To successfully combat against the ever-growing need for renal specialist care all over New Mexico, Renal Medicine Associates has expanded to now offer offices not only in Albuquerque, but in Roswell and Las Cruces as well. In addition to the offices we see patients at, we are also continuously expanding our dialysis care into other parts of the state. We now have providers rounding at dialysis units in Clovis, Alamogordo, Deming and the surrounding areas of Albuquerque. Even with all this expansion, we still understand that there are parts of New Mexico that are still unable to benefit from the services of renal specialist care. It is this reason that we are now expanding into the Telemedicine/Telehealth setting. We want to offer every patient that has kidney disease, or any of its accompanying conditions, a chance to benefit from the specialized care that we provide and the many advantages of receiving prompt and regular kidney care.

This packet serves to educate our patients on what Telehealth/Telemedicine is, as well as answer any questions that they may have before their first visit with our provider(s) via electronic communication. Please read through and learn about all the wonderful benefits that telemedicine has to offer and how it can become a part of your healthcare experience now, and in the future. Please also see the weblinks provided towards the end of this brochure to expand your knowledge even further and continue to read about telehealth, kidney disease and Renal Medicine Associates. Thank you so much for being our patient and, as always, take care, and be well!

## **Services Provided by Telehealth**

Sometimes telehealth is best understood in terms of the services provided and the mechanisms used to provide those services. Here are some examples:

*Live videoconferencing (synchronous)* – the delivery of a live, interactive consultation between Primary care and specialist health services. This may involve a primary care or allied health professional providing a consultation with a patient, or a specialist assisting the primary care physician in rendering a diagnosis.

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***Store and forward (asynchronous)*** – the use of store and forward transmission of diagnostic images, vital signs and/or video clips along with patient data for later review that enables a primary care or allied health professional providing a consultation the ability to render a diagnosis.

***Remote patient monitoring (RPM)*** – including home telehealth, uses devices to remotely collect and send data to a home health agency or a remote diagnostic testing facility (RDTF) for interpretation. Such applications might include a specific vital sign, such as blood glucose or heart ECG or a variety of indicators for homebound consumers. Such services can be used to supplement the use of visiting nurses.

***Mobile health (mHealth)*** – Consumer medical and health information includes the use of the internet and wireless devices for consumers to obtain specialized health information and online discussion groups to provide peer-to-peer support.

## **Telehealth Advantages**

***Improved Access*** – Since its inception, telehealth has been used to bring healthcare services to consumers in distant locations. Telehealth not only improves consumer access; it extends the geographic reach and expertise of physicians and health facilities. Given provider shortages around the world, telehealth has a unique and appealing value proposition. It can provide millions of people in both rural and urban areas access to safe, effective and appropriate care when and where they need it.

***Cost Efficiencies*** – Reducing or containing the cost of healthcare is one of the strongest motivators to fund and adopt virtual care technologies. Telehealth reduces the cost of healthcare and increases efficiency with better management of chronic diseases, shared health professional staffing, reduced travel times, and fewer or shorter hospital stays.

***Improved Quality*** – Studies have consistently shown that the quality of healthcare services delivered via telehealth are as good as those given in traditional in-person consultations. In some specialties, particularly in mental health and ICU care, telehealth delivers a superior product, with greater outcomes and consumer satisfaction.

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**Consumer Demand** – The greatest impact of telehealth is on the consumer, their family and their community. Using telehealth technologies reduces travel time and related stresses for the consumer. Over the past 15 years, multiple studies have documented consumer satisfaction and support for telehealth services. Such services offer consumers the access to providers that might not be available otherwise, as well as medical services without the need to travel long distances.

**At-a-glance Benefits of participating in a telemedicine consult include:**

- Access to medical providers without the costs associated with travel
- The ability to stay close to home and in proximity to family and caretakers
- Telehealth will continue to grow and be widely utilized by providers in the future
- Telehealth reduces overall costs of medicine and is beneficial for patients, insurers, and providers
- The technology needed to perform telemedicine is constantly improving

## **Telehealth Disadvantages**

**Reduction of In-Person Interactions with Doctors** – Some critics of telemedicine argue that online interactions are impersonal, and physical exams are often necessary to make a full diagnosis. In-person patient-doctor visits are clearly valuable and necessary in many circumstances. Telemedicine is best used to supplement these visits – to do simple check-ins with patients and make sure everything is going well. For minor acute conditions (like infections), an in-person visit with an established patient is often not needed. In those cases, telemedicine can save the patient, the doctor, and the healthcare system time and money.

**Fear of Misdiagnosis** – Misdiagnosis can happen regardless of whether someone is in a doctor’s office or their own living room. There have been very few reports of issues in this area, but it’s important to remember that telehealth doctors are meant to supplement traditional office visits — not replace them.

**Electronic glitches** – Technology is only as reliable as the electrical current that keeps it running. Inclement weather and other annoyances can cause a power outage or disrupt an internet connection, complicating online consultation with a doctor. Workers should keep that in mind prior to scheduling online visits.

## **At-a-glance Risks of participating in a telemedicine visit:**

- The connection may fail to work or may be disconnected during an encounter which might result in delays in care
- If it is felt that the care rendered during the visit is not enough to appropriately address my problem or provide adequate care, I may be required to see my provider in person
- In very rare instances, security protocols could fail, causing a breach of privacy of personal and medical information. In these situations, my providers will utilize any and all means necessary to correct the error as outlined in the policies related to HIPAA, Privacy, and Terms of Use and will notify me of the status of such breach and attempts at correction
- My insurance may not cover telemedicine services rendered and I may be required to pay for such service

## **Delivery Mechanisms**

Networked programs link tertiary care hospitals and clinics with outlying clinics and community health centers in rural or suburban areas. The links may use dedicated high-speed lines or the Internet for telecommunication links between sites. ATA estimates the number of existing telehealth networks in the United States at roughly 200 providing connectivity to over 3,000 sites.

Point-to-point connections using private high-speed networks are used by hospitals and clinics that deliver services directly or outsource specialty services to independent medical service providers. Such outsourced services include radiology, stroke assessment, mental health, and intensive care services.

Monitoring center links are used for cardiac, pulmonary or fetal monitoring, home care and related services that provide care to patients in the home. Often normal landline or wireless connections are used to communicate directly between the patient and the center although some systems use the Internet.

Web-based e-health consumer service sites provide direct consumer outreach and services over the Internet. Under telehealth, these include those sites that provide direct consumer care.

## **Additional Information – Links**

For additional information to expand on the information provided within this document, please visit the following links to learn more about telemedicine/telehealth, as well as Renal Medicine Associates and Chronic Kidney Disease.

- **eVisit –**

A comprehensive guide on telemedicine, including what it is, how it is used today, statistical information on telemedicine and much, much more. Please visit:

<https://evisit.com/resources/what-is-telemedicine/>

- **American Telemedicine Association (ATA) –**

The only organization completely focused on advancing telehealth. The ATA is working to change the way the world thinks about healthcare. Please visit the following link to find out more:

<https://www.americantelemed.org/>

- **Renal Medicine Associates –**

A complete guide to all that Renal Med has to offer, including an introduction to our providers, our facility, and a useful tool to schedule an appointment if you would like. Please visit:

<https://renalmed.com/>

- **National Kidney Foundation –**

The National Kidney Foundation is the leading organization in the U.S. dedicated to the awareness, prevention and treatment of kidney disease for hundreds of thousands of healthcare professionals, millions of patients and their families, and tens of millions of Americans at risk. Please visit the following link to find out more:

<https://www.kidney.org/>

- **American Associate of Kidney Patients –**

AAKP is dedicated to improving the lives and long-term outcome of kidney patients through education, advocacy, patient engagement and the fostering of patient communities. Please visit:

<https://aakp.org/>