

## Role of Tele-health in Expansion of Medical Care

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**Abstract :** Objective: The expansion of telehealth has been instrumental in increasing access to medical services, especially for underserved and rural communities. In 2020, 14 million patients received virtual care through telemedicine and the global telemedicine market is expected to reach up to \$185 million by 2023. It provides a platform and allows a patient to receive primary care as well as specialized care using technology and the comfort of their homes. Telemedicine was particularly useful during COVID-pandemic and the number of telehealth visits increased by 5000% during that time. It continues to serve as a significant resource for patients seeking care and to bridge the gap between the disease and the treatment. Method: As per APA (American Psychiatric Association), Telemedicine is the process of providing health care from a distance through technology. It is a subset of telemedicine, and can involve providing a range of services, including evaluations, therapy, patient education and medication management. It can involve direct interaction between a physician and the patient. It also encompasses supporting primary care providers with specialist consultation and expertise. It can also involve recording medical information (images, videos, etc.) and sending this to a distant site for later review. Results: In our organization, we are using telepsychiatry and serving 25 counties and approximately 1.4 million people. We provide multiple services, including inpatient, outpatient, crisis intervention, Rehab facility, autism services, case management, community treatment and multiple other modalities. With project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) it has been used to advise and assist primary care providers in treating mental health. It empowers primary care providers to treat patients in their own community by sharing knowledge. Conclusion: Telemedicine has shown to be a great medium in meeting patients' needs and accessible mental health. It has been shown to improve access to care in both urban and rural settings by bringing care to a patient and reducing barriers like transportation, financial stress and resources. Telemedicine is also helping with reducing ER visits, integrating primary care and improving the continuity of care and follow-up. There has been substantial evidence and research about its effectiveness and its usage.

**Keywords :** telehealth, telemedicine, access to care, medical technology

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