

Why SA Healthcare Providers Need to Adopt Long-Term Telehealth Strategies – IT News.com – 22 July 2021

This shortage of medical professionals costs the country in terms of the negative impact on people's health and the increased price of healthcare provision – making possible alternative methods of delivering healthcare, like [telemedicine](#), essential to the success of any future healthcare strategy, including the proposed National Health Insurance (NHI) programme.

Telehealth Can Bridge the Country's Healthcare Gap

Telehealth has already proven to be the global future of medicine, locally and abroad.

Using this technology, medical professionals can cater to a wide range of healthcare needs, overcome geographical barriers, and avoid exposure to COVID-19 in clinic queues and waiting rooms.

Web-based platform, Secure Telehealth, is the perfect example of how cost-effective video conferencing makes healthcare more accessible and [extends high-quality critical healthcare services](#) to underserved rural communities facing a shortage of healthcare providers.

The web-based platform used this technology to overcome the challenge of mental healthcare professionals having to drive from location to location to meet patients who might otherwise not have access to critical mental healthcare services and regular appointments to improve outcomes.

Over in the USA, healthcare officers from the Duke University School of Medicine saw more than [600 patients per day via video conferencing](#) following the stay-at-home order in March 2020, after replacing numerous in-person clinic visitations with video visits.

Telehealth visits increased within four weeks, from less than 1% of total visits to 70% of total visits, reaching more than 1,000 video visits per day.

These advancements highlight the overwhelming benefits of telehealth technology, particularly in countries like South Africa, which have a poor doctor-to-patient ratio.

The Benefits of Telehealth Extend Beyond COVID-19

According to Frost and Sullivan's [Applying the Lessons of COVID-19 to Telehealth](#), telehealth tools should extend beyond meeting healthcare needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and should form part of healthcare providers' ongoing strategy to increase performance and operate efficiently.

That's because telehealth and video collaboration tools have been effective in helping organisations meet their Quadruple Aim goals, which stem from the Triple Aim developed by the [Institute of Healthcare Improvement](#) (IHI).

These goals are focused on improving the patient care experience, improving the health of a population, reducing per capita healthcare costs, and improving the clinician experience.

According to the [2020 Future Health Index](#), healthcare professionals saw the value of digital health technology in improving patients' healthcare experience, improving their job satisfaction, achieving better patient outcomes, and allowing them to spend more time with patients.

By adopting telehealth solutions, healthcare providers can provide better healthcare services to more patients and optimise their internal healthcare operations.

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