

## Forms of Telehealth

Telehealth – also known as *telemedicine*, *digital health*, *e-health* and *virtual care* – refers to healthcare services delivered remotely using advanced electronic technology. Some of the more common telehealth modalities are described below:

Form:	Definition:	Examples and uses:
<b>Video conferencing</b>	Live two-way interaction between patient and healthcare provider using audiovisual telecommunications technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Real-time healthcare services</b> and consultations for remote patients.</li> <li>• <b>Annual wellness visits</b> to clinics and medical offices.</li> <li>• <b>Collaborative consultation</b>, medical diagnosis and treatment by physicians and other providers based in different locations.</li> <li>• <b>Convenient referrals</b> to physically distant specialty providers.</li> <li>• <b>Emergency and critical care</b> in outlying locations, including prompt assessment of patients and consultation with specialists.</li> <li>• <b>Mental health services</b> for rural-based or underserved patients.</li> </ul>
<b>Store-and-forward or asynchronous video</b>	Electronic transmission of patient health and medical data to a healthcare provider, who then treats the patient at a later time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>X-rays, MRIs, photos and other images</b> used for diagnostic purposes by primary or specialty providers.</li> <li>• <b>Prerecorded video clips</b> of patient examinations used to enhance the diagnostic process.</li> <li>• <b>Patient data</b> – including electronic health records, laboratory reports and medication management files – transmitted to specialists for use in consultations.</li> <li>• <b>Translated healthcare records</b> of non-English-speaking patients to facilitate provider treatment or consultation.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and diagnostics</b>	Electronic collection of patient data via “wearables” and “implantables,” in order to enhance clinical monitoring and treatment of conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Physiological data</b> – including blood pressure, heart rate, weight, and levels of oxygenation and blood sugar, among other metrics – gathered in real time.</li> <li>• <b>Comprehensive reports on chronic diseases</b> – e.g., diabetes, hypertension, asthma – used for data-driven decision-making and virtual patient education.</li> <li>• <b>Device-initiated alerts</b> to providers regarding patient noncompliance with diet recommendations, activity directives and other aspects of the treatment/care plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Mobile health or “mHealth”</b>	A subset of telehealth that – using software applications designed for smartphones and other handheld communication devices – focuses on educating patients as well as connecting them electronically with their providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Personalized educational applications</b> that promote patient self-management of medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes.</li> <li>• <b>Tools that integrate with electronic health records</b> and offer providers a more detailed view of a patient’s medical history.</li> <li>• <b>Interfaces with wearable tech devices</b> that facilitate real-time review of patient data by members of the healthcare team.</li> <li>• <b>Automated reminders</b> to change surgical dressings, take medications or otherwise follow post-procedure recovery instructions.</li> </ul>