



AAP Adolescent Telehealth Care ECHO

Leveraging Telehealth to Effectively Care for Adolescents During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Introduce Yourself



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Microphones



5 min: Introduction
25 min: Lecture
5 min: QI Review
20 min: Case/Discussion
5 min: Close

Agenda



LECTURE

Maintaining Confidentiality when Caring for Adolescents in a Telehealth Setting

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Review key components of providing confidential care for adolescents (ages 11 – 21).
- Identify important considerations for maintaining confidentiality **before, during, and after** a telehealth visit with an adolescent.



CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH CARE

- Adolescents are sometimes unaware of where they can receive confidential services (substance use, reproductive health, mental health services), and that their primary care provider/primary care medical home is an option.
- Adolescents younger than age 18 can consent to several services independently, but this varies by state.
 - For information about minor consent laws regarding reproductive health services by state, visit the [Guttmacher Institute](#).
 - Be sure to review the minor consent laws for various services within your state.



CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH CARE, CONTINUED

- Reassurance from the pediatric clinician **that care is confidential** increases the adolescent's willingness to disclose sensitive health information.
- Adolescents and young adults may not share critical health information without confidentiality, which can result in foregone care.
 - One study showed that adolescents who reported health risk behaviors and psychological distress were more likely to indicate that concern about confidentiality is a reason to decline care.
- Only 39% of adolescents age 13-18 have discussed confidentiality with their pediatric clinician.

Berlan ED, Bravender T. Confidentiality, consent, and caring for the adolescent patient. *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*. 2009;21(3): 450-456. doi: 10.1097/MOP.0b013e32832ce009

Lehrer JA, Pantell R, Tebb K, Shafer MA. Forgone health care among U.S. adolescents: associations between risk characteristics and confidentiality concern. *J Adolesc Health*. 2007;40(3):218-226.

doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2006.09.015

https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/Adolescent_Health_Investing_in_Adolescent_and_Young_Adult_Health_Booklet.pdf

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ONE-ON-ONE TIME: A REVIEW

- One-on-one time between the clinician and adolescent patient should be a part of every visit.
 - *Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents* recommends starting the conversation about one-on-one time with patients and parents as early as 11 years old; amount of time alone will vary based on topics and issues addressed.
 - [Info Brief for Parents about 1:1 Time](#)
 - Almost half of all American adolescents have never had confidential, one-on-one time with their pediatric health care provider.
 - 32% of adolescents age 13-18, and 63% of young adults age 19-26

Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, 4th Edition
https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/Adolescent_Health_Investing_in_Adolescent_and_Young_Adult_Health_Booklet.pdf



CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONFIDENTIALITY: BEFORE THE TELEHEALTH VISIT

- Prepare the adolescent (and family) that the adolescent will have time alone with the provider during the telehealth visit.
- Encourage the patient to find as quiet and private of a place to talk as possible
 - Encourage use of headphones, etc.
- Ensure that pre-visit communication is HIPAA-compliant.
 - Use the portal to communicate, when possible.
- Ensure that the telehealth platform is HIPAA-compliant.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONFIDENTIALITY: DURING THE TELEHEALTH VISIT

- Facilitate time alone with the patient during some component of the visit.
 - Have a strategy about how you will communicate this to families/caregivers.
- Discuss confidentiality with the adolescent patient.
 - The AAP has [several video examples](#) of what this can look like.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRIVACY DURING THE TELEHEALTH VISIT

For Providers

- Only use a HIPAA-compliant, encrypted platform for clinical encounters (exception during current public health emergency).
- In all settings – ensure audio privacy. Close doors and windows; consider headphones.
- Use audio-cancelling or white noise devices outside the rooms if in the non-clinical setting.

For Adolescents and Families

- Assure that family/caregiver and adolescent are aware that you will need 1-1 time (time alone) with the patient.
- Establish who else is present with the patient at the time of the visit.
- Ask the adolescent to use ear buds or headphones if possible, for added privacy.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONFIDENTIALITY: AFTER THE TELEHEALTH VISIT

- Billing/Coding
 - “...policies and procedures should be established so that health care billing and insurance claims processes do not impede the ability of providers to deliver essential health care services on a confidential basis to adolescents and young adults covered as dependents on a family’s health insurance plan.”
- Utilize the patient portal for communication with the patient and family after the visit.
 - Make sure that the patient knows about the portal and how to use it.



21ST CENTURY CURES ACT: CONSIDERATIONS FOR TELEHEALTH CARE FOR ADOLESCENTS

- Rules provide a framework to increase types of electronic health information (EHI) accessible to patients and families.
- New rules could enable and empower adolescents to start managing their own health needs through transition into adulthood by making more information.
- Keep in mind: Parents/caregivers could inappropriately gain access to protected adolescent health data, or adolescents could share their own data without fully understanding the implications.
- Pediatric healthcare providers should educate patients and families about how to keep their information secure – this applies to in-person care as well as telehealth care.



ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULT PERSPECTIVES: CONFIDENTIALITY

**“What do you want your pediatrician to know about confidentiality/privacy?
What is important to you?”**

- “A lot of us don’t know the measures that are taken to protect our information – explain more about this to patients.”
- “Explain to us if/how privacy and confidentiality change when we have a telehealth visit. Are different measures being used to keep our information confidential?”
- “What are the limits to confidentiality?”
- “Explain how the patient can work to keep their own information private.”
- “We don’t necessarily fully understand all of our options for patient portal communications – what options do I have?”



Source: Young Adult Advisory Panel Meeting, 1/29/2021



SUMMARY

- Providing confidential care is a critically important component to adolescent health care.
- There are several steps that a provider can take **before, during, and after** the telehealth visit to ensure confidentiality.



RESOURCES

- [AAP Adolescent Health Care Toolkit](#)
- [AAP Interim Clinical Guidance on the Necessary Use of Telehealth during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [AAP Interim Clinical Guidance on Providing Pediatric Well-Care during COVID-19](#)
- [AAP Telehealth Support Compendium](#)
- [American Telemedicine Association – Operating Procedures for Pediatric Telehealth](#)
- [Adolescent Health Initiative at the University of Michigan](#)
 - Many helpful resources, including:
 - [Starter Guide: Providing Adolescent-Centered Virtual Care](#)
- [Bright Futures National Center](#)
- [Building Rapport with Youth via Telehealth](#)
- [Coding Fact Sheets \(AAP\)](#)
 - [Coding Fact Sheet \(AAP\) – Adolescent Health](#)
 - [Coding Fact Sheet \(AAP\) – Telemedicine Services](#)
- [Curriculum for a Family-Centered Telehealth Experience - Family Voices](#)
- [Guttmacher Institute – State Policies on Teens](#)
- [Leadership Education in Adolescent Health \(LEAH\) Programs](#)
- [National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers](#)
- [US States and Territories Modifying Requirements for Telehealth in Response to COVID-19](#)
- [Telehealth 101 – HealthyChildren.org Article](#)
- **AAP Telehealth Technical Assistance Email Address: DistantCare@aap.org**

