



AAP Adolescent Telehealth Care ECHO

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

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$6,000,000 with no percentage financed with nongovernmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.



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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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February 17th, 2021



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:**
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