**Use of Telehealth to Meet Level 1 & 2 GEDA Requirements**

*This letter describes the ability to use telehealth in order to meet GEDA requirements and provides a checklist of elements to be included in the application process.*

Geriatric Emergency Medicine places a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary teamwork, and this is reflected in the GEDA requirements for accredited Geriatric EDs. In particular, the GEDA requirements for Level 1 & 2 GEDs include many of the following for each applying ED: 56 hours case management/ social work coverage per week in the ED, medication management/ pharmacy coverage, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. However, many EDs that seek (or may seek) GEDA Level 1 or 2 recognition are smaller and/ or rural EDs where it is unlikely that many of these services can be based in the ED due to the fewer number of patients needing their services at any one time. As such, it may make sense for these EDs to use telehealth to provide these interdisciplinary services. As an alternative platform for care delivery, Telehealth has gained traction in many clinical domains across multiple specialties including emergency medicine. Given that little is currently known about the efficacy of telehealth to provide these interdisciplinary services, this document is provided to set guidelines for how EDs might consider the use of telehealth to meet these GEDA application requirements. GEDA recognizes and supports the use of telemedicine to address certain services that are not currently available.

Telehealth may be considered for the following GEDA requirements:

- Case manager/ social work coverage
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational therapy
- Medication management
- Geriatric psychiatry
- Geriatric consults

For each of the above use case scenarios, the applying GEDA ED site must specify the telehealth deployment process that results in coverage equivalent in essential areas of care to in - person coverage. For example:

- How do the case manager/ social worker identify and connect patients with local resources
- How do physical and occupational therapists evaluate patients
- How is medication management performed remotely
- When it is / is not used (e.g., PT in person M-F 8-5, but telemedicine off hours)
- Timeliness of response
- How it is delivered
- Who facilitates in the ED

- Evaluation outcome

It is also required that each site applying to use telemedicine describe how they monitor and evaluate telehealth performance. Each site using telehealth must give an update to the GEDA Board at the end of the first year and at the time of each submitted GEDA renewal of telehealth utilization describing number of patients served, care successfully delivered, areas where telehealth program struggled to deliver care needed, and plans for continued improvement.

Each site applying to utilize telehealth must demonstrate the existence of policies and guidelines, illustrate the intended processes via workflow, outline the educational training areas that will be covered, and agree to use established metrics for evaluation.

| GEDA-Telehealth Checklist | |
|---|---|
| ☐ | Telehealth Policies and Guidelines |
| ☐ | Workflow |
| ☐ | Educational Content |
| ☐ | Telehealth Program Metrics |

The following sections will briefly explain each topic and provide a checklist to assist with the application process.

**Telehealth Policies and Guidelines**
Although applying sites will likely be utilizing telehealth in different ways, sites should be prepared to demonstrate policy or guidelines that support the use of telehealth in their organization or department. The topic areas listed below briefly cover the main topics that should be addressed, from regulatory/legal requirements to education requirements for staff and providers.

When possible, it is recommended that sites adhere to their organizations' existing guidelines, requirements, policies, etc., to minimize the impact to workflows and barriers to sustained utilization of telehealth.

Telehealth policies and guidelines typically include information regarding:

- Clinical and operational requirements
  - State/federal requirements
  - Establishment of a provider-patient relationship'
  - Informed consent
- Technical requirements
  - HIPAA compliant software
  - Audio and video capabilities
- Education requirements
  - Workflow
  - Consent

    - Documentation
    - Web etiquette
    - Assessment

**Workflow**

Each site must be able to demonstrate the telehealth implementation process via documented workflows. These workflows should identify key staff involved and the steps taken to prepare for, conduct, and document telehealth visits in the ED.

**Educational Content**

Successful telehealth programs incorporate education for health professionals and supporting departments (such as IT) close to the implementation of telehealth and periodically throughout as refreshers, part of the onboarding process, and as there are changes (e.g., state laws, consenting, etc.).

Educational content for telehealth often includes

- Workflow
- Consent
- Documentation
- Web Etiquette
- Policy
- Assessment

**Telehealth Program Metrics**

Sites will be required to provide data regarding the following metrics:

- Number of encounters and patients per quarter supported through telehealth platform
- Types of roles provided by telehealth
- Numbers of hours per week that telehealth is available for eligible services