Use of Telehealth to meet Level 1 & 2 GEDA Requirements (particularly for smaller/ rural EDs)

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:

- ED medication management
- 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.