



# Telehealth Readiness Assessment Tool

*An Ambulatory Practice Tool*

April 16, 2019



The MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

# Purpose and Rationale

- Help inform practices about provider, patient, caregiver, and organizational readiness for telehealth, assess readiness for offering telehealth services, identify areas that need improvement, and prioritize areas that need improvement
- Implementation of telehealth services requires practices to shift how they operate and deliver care as organizational processes are often set up to support face-to-face encounters
- For many practices, challenges to successfully implement a telehealth program may discourage adoption or deter patients from using telehealth

# Project Background

- MHCC's telehealth grantees frequently encountered challenges beyond adopting and implementing technology
  - Providers experienced difficulty in effectively using the technology; disruption in workflows were common; and many patients were unenthusiastic about the experience
  - Identifying and addressing practice readiness gaps is critical to a successful telehealth encounter
- In 2018, MHCC competitively selected RTI International to (1) develop a telehealth readiness assessment (TRA) questionnaire and scoring tool, (2) recruit practices to field test the tool, and (3) develop supporting guidance
- In 2019, MHCC competitively selected RTI International to (1) web-enable the TRA tool, (2) complete user testing, and (3) provide online hosting of the tool

# Key Areas of Telehealth Readiness

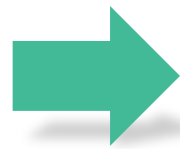
- *Core Readiness* – Extent to which a practice has considered the need, benefits, and challenges associated with implementation
- *Financial Considerations* – Expectations around initial costs, sustainability, liability, insurance, and reimbursement
- *Operations* – Impact on operations and the practice's ability and willingness to make appropriate changes
- *Staff Engagement* – Practice team interest and engagement
- *Patient Readiness* – Patient readiness and interest

# Development Approach – Web-Enabled Tool

- Identify design principles and requirements for functionality and navigation
  - **Flexible navigation** – Designed so users can quickly navigate to the sections that matter most and skip other sections as needed
  - **Web survey best practices** – Incorporates best practices for web design and usability (based on usability.gov) to reduce user burden
  - **Mobile friendly** – Optimized for mobile devices to allow users to complete the survey on any web-enabled device
  - **Print version of the tool** – Provides direct access to a print-ready version of the tool that can be completed offline
- Complete user testing with practices and launch hosting platform



Demonstration





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# Appendix

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## Next Steps

- Education and awareness of the TRA tool
- Present on the TRA tool at various local medical association symposiums

The TRA tool will be available here:  
[MHCCTelehealthTool.mhcc.maryland.gov](https://MHCCTelehealthTool.mhcc.maryland.gov)


# Telehealth Readiness Key Areas

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## Is your practice ready to offer telehealth services?


This telehealth readiness assessment tool is intended to be completed in around 20 minutes by the lead physician or office manager in collaboration with other stakeholders in their practice.

Select one of the five key concepts of telehealth to get started. The concepts may be completed in any order.



### 1. Core Readiness

Does telehealth fit your practice?  
How does leadership feel about it?



### 2. Financial Considerations

Can you afford telehealth?  
Can you afford not to offer it?



### 3. Operations

Are you prepared for telehealth?  
What do you need to get started?



### 4. Staff Engagement

How do staff feel about telehealth?  
Are they willing and engaged?



### 5. Patient Readiness

Is telehealth right for your patients?  
Is this what they want?





# Questionnaire

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## Key Components of Core Readiness

Each telehealth concept is made up of one or more key components. Supporting guidance documents are provided with each key component to provide additional information that can help you improve your practice's telehealth readiness in a particular area.

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-  1. Core Readiness
-  2. Financial Considerations
-  3. Operations
-  4. Staff Engagement

### 1. Core Readiness

1a. Need for Telehealth 1 out of 6 questions answered

**Ready**

The practice has considered many aspects related to the key component.

[Answer Questions](#)

[View Guidance](#)

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1b. Organizational Leadership Buy-In 4 out of 4 questions answered

**Almost Ready**

The practice has considered some aspects related to the key component.

[Answer Questions](#)

[View Guidance](#)

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## 1a. Core Readiness: Need for Telehealth

Question 1 of 6

Do patients in your practice have difficulty getting the medical care they need because providers are too far away, patients lack transportation, or patients are unable to leave work or home?

- No
- Somewhat
- Definitely
- Not Applicable

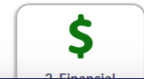
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# Scoring

## Key Components of Core Readiness

Each telehealth concept is made up of one or more key components. Supporting guidance documents are provided with each key component to provide additional information that can help you improve your practice's telehealth readiness in a

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### 1. Core Readiness

#### 1a. Need for Telehealth

Ready

The practice has considered many aspects related to the key component.

Domains	Concepts	Concept Weights	Total Domain Weight
1. Core Readiness	Need for Telehealth	10%	20%
	Organizational Leadership Buy-In	10%	
2. Financial Considerations			15%
3. Operations	Telehealth Roles	5%	40%
	Scheduling and Workflows	10%	
	Operational Requirements	5%	
	Assessment Approach	5%	
	Technology	10%	
	Physical Space	5%	
	Education and Awareness	7.55%	
	Champions	7.5%	15%
	Management	5%	10%
	Practicing	5%	

## My Results

Your results will appear on this page as you complete each key component of the readiness assessment.

Download All Guidance

Print My Results



### 1. Core Readiness

Answer Questions

View Guidance

Concept result:

Ready

The practice has considered many aspects related to the concept.



Key Component results:

1a. Need for Telehealth - Ready

1b. Organizational Leadership Buy-In - Ready



### 2. Financial Considerations

Answer Questions

View Guidance

Concept result:

Area for Improvement

The practice is in the beginning stages and/or has not considered many of the aspects related to the concept.



...be calculated because items are not applicable.  
 ...beginning stages and/or has not considered many of the  
 ...domain and would benefit from reviewing the associated  
 ...and taking appropriate action.  
 ...practice has considered some aspects related to the concept  
 ...associated Supporting Guidance document(s) to identify areas  
 ...considered many aspects related to the concept or domain. The  
 ...a resource for areas in which the scoring is lower.

# Supporting Guidance

## CORE READINESS: NEED FOR TELEHEALTH

### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR PRACTICE

When considering and developing a telehealth program, it is critical to understand the needs and motivation of the practice and patients and how telehealth can meet those needs. Identifying areas for improvement,<sup>1</sup> unmet patient needs,<sup>2</sup> the overall strategic plan for your practice<sup>3,4</sup> and how telehealth is incorporated within the practice vision can help create a strong case for telehealth. Telehealth involves a variety of services and identifying specific services to offer should be based on your practice context and the needs of your patients. A telehealth service that a colleague offers in his or her practice may not be the best fit for yours. Your practice should identify ways that telehealth can help address the needs of your practice and its patient population. Ultimately, the benefit of telehealth comes from its potential to provide value to different types of stakeholders, including patients, staff, vendors, and payers.<sup>5</sup>

### ACTIONS TO TAKE

There are several types of actions to consider prior to telehealth implementation. These include identifying the need for telehealth to determine what services to offer and identifying benefits of those services.

### IDENTIFY THE NEED FOR TELEHEALTH

**EVALUATE HOW TELEHEALTH ALIGNS WITH THE OVERARCHING GOALS OF THE PRACTICE** including your strategic plan and vision for the future.<sup>6,7</sup> Telehealth may be able to help address concerns or fill gaps in your current practice.<sup>3,4,8,9</sup> Some needs telehealth can address include:



- ❖ Overcome patient barriers to receiving care (e.g., distance, availability or transportation difficulties).<sup>10-12</sup>

**EXAMPLE:** If a significant portion of your patient population requires comprehensive behavioral health care but there are limited local specialists, telehealth may be able to expand access to specialists and/or reduce the amount of time patients spend driving to appointments.

# Supporting Guidance

## DETERMINE WHAT TELEHEALTH SERVICES TO OFFER

**IDENTIFY SERVICES FOR WHICH THERE IS AN IMMEDIATE AND COMPELLING NEED<sup>2</sup>** then expand to other areas.<sup>1</sup> This will help establish buy-in and ease the transition into telehealth.

Common places to start include:

- ❖ **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES** - If there is a gap between the availability of on-site or local mental health services and patient needs, telehealth may be used to reach specialists and address this issue.<sup>18,19</sup>
- ❖ **FOLLOW-UP** - Telehealth can be used for follow-up care for chronic conditions, wound care and other conditions requiring multiple visits.<sup>20</sup>
- ❖ **ADDRESSING LOCATION BARRIERS** - Remote or immobile patient populations may benefit from telehealth.<sup>12,21</sup> In addition, remote patient monitoring may enhance services already in place.<sup>22,23</sup>

Not every telehealth application or videoconferencing use will be valuable for every practice. For example, if your patient population does not have access to technology at home, then remote patient monitoring may not be a good fit.<sup>5</sup>

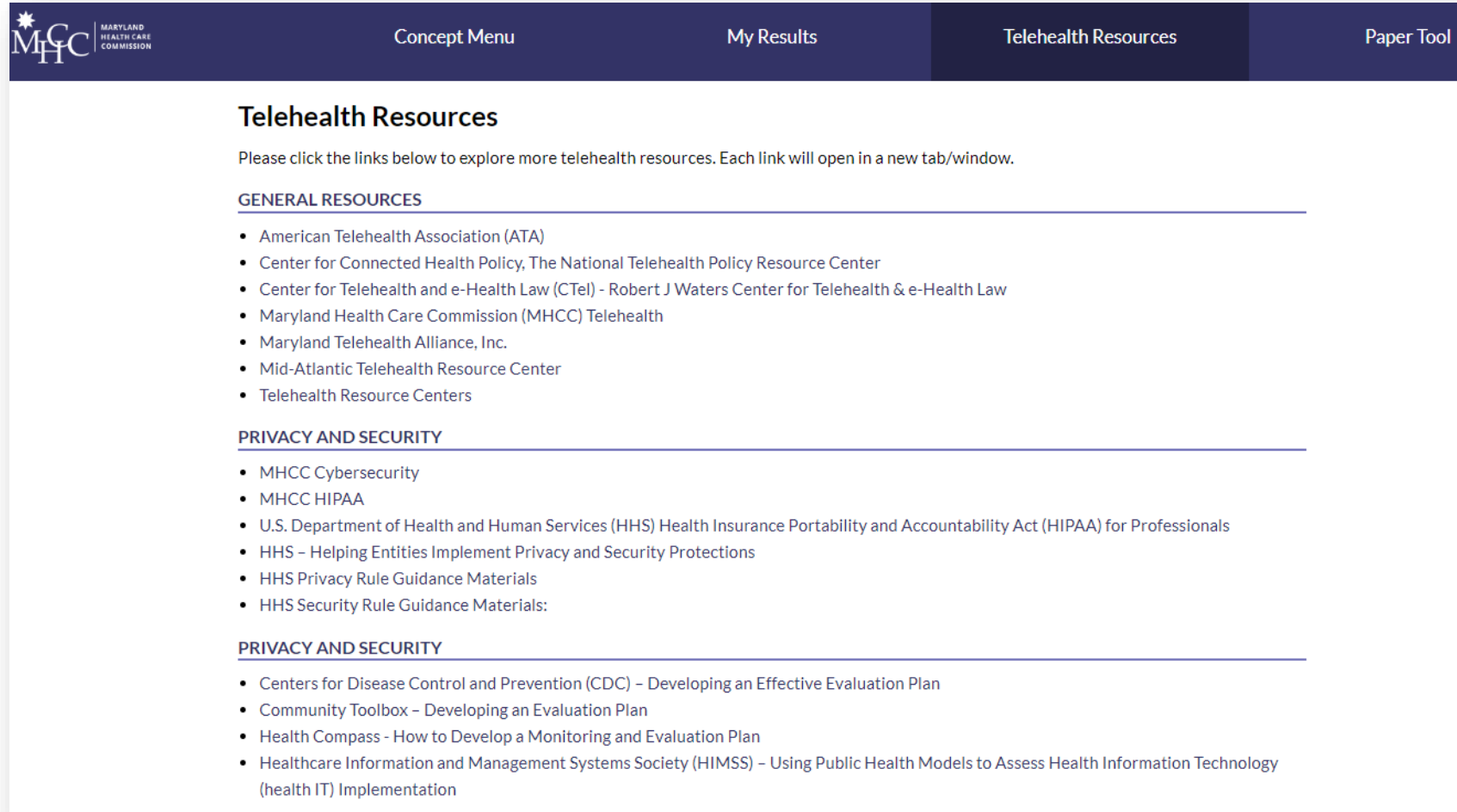
**EXAMPLE:** Practices in rural areas may use telehealth to facilitate a specialty visit in a larger city to reduce the travel time for patients to receive additional care.<sup>24-26</sup>

## DOCUMENT BENEFITS OF TELEHEALTH SERVICES

Once you identify what telehealth services will be offered<sup>27</sup> then quantify the benefits you expect to achieve. This includes developing and sharing goals, considering the patient perspective and the practice perspective.



# Telehealth Resources Document



**MHC** MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

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## Telehealth Resources

Please click the links below to explore more telehealth resources. Each link will open in a new tab/window.

### GENERAL RESOURCES

- American Telehealth Association (ATA)
- Center for Connected Health Policy, The National Telehealth Policy Resource Center
- Center for Telehealth and e-Health Law (CTel) - Robert J Waters Center for Telehealth & e-Health Law
- Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) Telehealth
- Maryland Telehealth Alliance, Inc.
- Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center
- Telehealth Resource Centers

### PRIVACY AND SECURITY

- MHCC Cybersecurity
- MHCC HIPAA
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for Professionals
- HHS - Helping Entities Implement Privacy and Security Protections
- HHS Privacy Rule Guidance Materials
- HHS Security Rule Guidance Materials:

### PRIVACY AND SECURITY

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Developing an Effective Evaluation Plan
- Community Toolbox - Developing an Evaluation Plan
- Health Compass - How to Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) - Using Public Health Models to Assess Health Information Technology (health IT) Implementation