The Importance of Technology in Accessible Health Care

Community Chats- May 2022

We recognize that our community's health is interconnected with all aspects of life, and we hope Community Chats help to provide a look at the bigger picture and how all of our work is connected. Prior to each chat we've sent out resources for attendees to review.

Topic Resources:

- **Understanding Key Telehealth Disparities & Patient-Facing Barriers**
  - Though the telehealth spike in recent years has largely been beneficial for patients, there are several entrenched care gaps and access barriers widening health inequities that must be addressed. From discussing demographics, the digital divide, types of concerns from broadband access, language barriers, privacy concerns. This is a comprehensive coverage of barriers.
- **Seniors who struggle with technology face telehealth challenges and social isolation**
  - This 2020 CNN article talks about how the increased use of technology at the start of the pandemic impacted senior citizens and their ability to 'pivot' the way the majority of the population was. From buying groceries, virtual gatherings, and health care.
- **How can we ensure digital inclusion for older adults?**
  - This 2021 World Economic Forum article discusses six insights from the World Economic Forum Global Future Council on Healthy Ageing and Longevity on how we can ensure digital inclusion for older adults.
- **Digital healthcare can be a catalyst for greater health equity**
  - This is another World Economic Forum article that does include a 'podcast' style reading of it and a video. It discusses how the pandemic has accelerated the uptake of digital healthcare solutions and that this shift to digitalization can be a powerful force in achieving health equity. But to do so, we will need to rethink the fundamentals of healthcare delivery.
- **For the final resource here is a situation Neighborcare staff experienced a few years ago:**
  - At the start of the pandemic Neighborcare pivoted to provide telehealth to our patients. However for our patients experiencing homelessness, there were barriers in place. "The Clinic team's flexibility and creativity in ensuring we are able to meet patients' needs during the pandemic has been another wonderful success. While many health care providers transitioned to telehealth as much as possible with the advent of COVID-19, the Clinic's patient population typically does not have reliable access to the technology necessary to attend telehealth visits. Instead of a traditional telehealth model, we have been able to implement a modified one that works for our patients. Patients schedule appointments as usual and come in as scheduled. If telehealth is appropriate for their care, their appointment takes place in a room equipped with the technology necessary to interface with their provider virtually from inside the Clinic, reducing exposure for both patients and staff without increasing the barriers our patients already face in accessing care."