

Amidst lockdowns and office closures in 2020, providers turned to telehealth to provide care to older adults. However, many telehealth programs were created rapidly and without resources and guidelines to address and serve the unique needs of older adults well. In 2021, West Health Institute created the Collaborative for Telehealth and Aging (C4TA), in part, to develop a set of comprehensive, provider-focused recommendations for delivering care via telehealth to older adults. C4TA is a unique and robust group of subject matter experts including geriatricians, experienced telehealth providers, health system administrators, and older adult and patient advocates. C4TA's recommended principles and guidelines to providing telehealth highlight older adults' needs and create a roadmap for providers and health systems to take actionable steps to meet those needs.

## PRINCIPLE 1

### Person-Centered Care

The older adult being served is at the center of all decision-making. The older adult's care preferences, goals, wishes, abilities, support system, and conditions are accounted for.

### Person-Centered Care Guidelines:

Person-centered telehealth...

1. Accounts for older adults' healthcare goals, care preferences, and 'what matters'
2. Promotes high-value use cases that drive older-adult-focused goals, incorporating payer and provider perspectives
3. Supports coordination and continuity of care
4. Ensures that older adults and their caregivers are prepared and understand what to expect from a telehealth encounter
5. Promotes opportunities to use telehealth to increase access to care while reducing avoidable costs
6. Reduces time to access providers across healthcare settings
7. Incorporates older adults' family and caregivers when appropriate and consistent with the older adults' wishes

## PRINCIPLE 2

### Equitable and Accessible Care

Everyone should have equal access to the same level of high-quality care, regardless of age, ability, socio-economic status, health and technology literacy, or rural, suburban or urban locations.

### Equitable and Accessible Care Guidelines:

Equitable and accessible telehealth...

1. Accounts for older adults' physical and cognitive differences
2. Accounts for cultural and linguistic differences of older adults' and their caregivers
3. Accounts for technology literacy and readiness older adults' and their caregivers
4. Uses telehealth to address needs across all settings, including the home, as promptly as possible
5. Ensures that staff and providers engage in on-going education on best practices for using telehealth with older adults
6. Accounts for differences in access to technology and connectivity

## PRINCIPLE 3

### Integrated and Coordinated Care

Integrated and coordinated care should include active participation from patients, caregivers, and providers across the care continuum. Systems should be set up to facilitate access to the information and support necessary to provide quality care to older adults.

### Integrated and Coordinated Care Guidelines:

Integrated and coordinated telehealth...

1. Facilitates telehealth providers have access to older adults' health history
2. Facilitates safe, coordinated transitions of care
3. Integrates into the care continuum / provider practice
4. Connects crucial stakeholders throughout the entire process
5. Supports staff working at the top of their licenses to drive efficiency

