Teladoc HEALTH

Clinical Quality

Highlights from our interview with Bridget McCabe, MD

Virtual care programs grew exponentially when COVID-19 shut down in-person care options—and they continue to be a popular choice for many people. But how can employers or health plans determine whether a program is safe and effective, in addition to convenient? We recently asked Teladoc Health's Dr. Bridget McCabe to share how organizations can evaluate virtual care programs for clinical quality, and why virtual care can be just as effective as in-person care in improving health outcomes, if not more so.

Dr. McCabe is an actively practicing physician in addition to her role at Teladoc Health, in which she is focused on improving care and scaling clinical quality across our national and international network of virtual care providers. Dr. McCabe also serves as the Chief Medical Officer of Teladoc Health's Patient Safety Organization, the first virtual care patient safety organization in the country. She is board certified in both pediatrics and clinical informatics and holds a medical doctorate with distinction in the field of neuroscience from Harvard Medical School.

Bridget McCabe, MD,
Vice President of Enterprise Clinical Quality and Informatics
Teladoc Health

Q: What is it about virtual care that, if done right, has the capacity to be such a game-changer for clinical quality?

With virtual care, we not only have digitization of the electronic medical record, we also have access to many other components of the visit, so we can be more proactive. Leveraging technology to deliver personalized feedback at every touchpoint in the care stream is moving the needle on clinical quality aspects that have historically been difficult to change.

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Imagine a short, a medium and a tall person are trying to look over a fence. **Equitable means everybody can see over the fence.** So the shorter person has a bigger box to stand on...digital technology can be that box.

Q: How do employers and health plans start to compare and measure the quality of virtual care solutions and options in a meaningful way?

Virtual programs deliver care, yes, but they are also powerful tools for bringing people and data together. Through this lens, virtual care providers become care traffic controllers—seeing every aspect of a person's care plan and making sure they're heading toward better health outcomes. It's important that the platforms also use their data to learn and evolve. What's the right care for this virtual channel and what's not appropriate for this virtual channel? Constant observation and evaluation are part of the domain of safety.

Q: Are there specific aspects of clinical quality that organizations should evaluate to determine whether a solution follows clinical quality practices?

At the end of the day, the service should be making it easier to do right and harder to do wrong. If I think about effective care, I would want to ensure that the solution is actually delivering evidence-based medicine. It's important to look at process and outcome measures. The solution should be using continuous quality improvement tools for its critical processes, leading to improved outcomes on both the provider side and on the patient side.

Listen to the entire discussion with Dr. McCabe to hear more about how high-quality virtual care could help your organization and the people you support.

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