

# MEASURING PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION WITH TELEMEDICINE: A QUICK GUIDE TO SURVEY SELECTION

## INTRODUCTION

### WHY MEASURE PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION?

The primary purpose of measuring patient experience and satisfaction with telemedicine is to inform quality improvement efforts at your health center.<sup>1</sup> Measuring and working to improve patient experience with telemedicine can benefit patients and health centers in several ways:

- **Positive patient experiences increase engagement in and adherence to care.** Research shows that patients who have positive experiences are more likely to engage in prevention and disease management processes of care, adhere to medical advice and treatment plans, and experience better health outcomes.
- **Positive patient experiences are associated with organizational benefits.** For organizations, positive experiences are associated with lower medical malpractice risk and greater employee satisfaction.
- **Ongoing assessment of patient experience and satisfaction can inform quality improvement and contribute to program sustainability.** Measuring patient experience can reveal important problems like gaps in provider-patient communications that can have broad implications for clinical quality and safety. Implementing a process of measurement and quality improvement can increase the likelihood that telemedicine programs will contribute to patient-centered care and be sustained.

### HOW CAN HEALTH CENTERS USE SURVEY DATA?

Once you have accumulated survey results, you can conduct different kinds of analyses to identify your health center's relative strengths and weaknesses with regard to patient experience. Options for using survey data include:

- **Compare.** You can compare your health center's survey scores to benchmarks (e.g., scores of similar organizations) or to your own health center's past performance.
- **Predict Satisfaction.** You can also assess which aspects of the telemedicine experience are most relevant to your patients (e.g., timeliness of care,

---

<sup>1</sup> For additional information on how to use patient experience surveys to inform quality improvement see: <https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/cahps-ambulatory-care-guide-full.pdf>

communication style of telemedicine provider) and which are most correlated with overall satisfaction with telemedicine.

- **Combine with Other Data Sources.** You can gather additional information from other sources (e.g., interviews and focus groups with providers and patients, review of visit appointment records, review and analysis of patient comment cards, direct observation by shadowing patients during visits) to confirm what you have found or to provide extra detail and context on gaps you have identified through surveys.
- **Measure Small-Scale Quality Improvement Changes.** Once you have begun collecting patient experience and satisfaction data regularly, you can identify strategies for making improvements, including changes to internal processes and protocols. Before you start to make big changes, you can use survey data to measure the impact of small-scale demonstrations first. Small-scale demonstrations or small tests of change also allow you to refine the new processes, demonstrate their impact on practices and outcomes, and build increased support by stakeholders.

#### WHAT'S IN THIS QUICK-GUIDE?

This guide includes several sections designed to help you design and field patient surveys on experiences and satisfaction with live video telemedicine in your health center.

- **Section 1.** In the first section, we provide information the range and types of questions that are typically included in patient experience and satisfaction surveys on telemedicine. You can use this section to see if the surveys you are using include all the types of questions that may be relevant to your organization.
- **Section 2.** In section 2, we introduce a new (not yet validated) patient experience survey that we developed with survey experts at RAND that you can modify and use as you wish. This instrument may be especially helpful to health centers that are not currently fielding a patient experience survey. This survey was developed following a review of the literature and consultation with survey experts.
- **Section 3.** In section 3, we present edited versions of the surveys that health centers participating in the California Health Care Foundation's telehealth initiative submitted to us, and we offer recommendations on how to improve these surveys. We have applied promising practices in survey design to identify potential areas for improvement.

## SECTION 1: CONTENTS OF TELEMEDICINE SURVEYS

Patient surveys on experiences and satisfaction with telemedicine typically include questions that map to six different constructs:

1. Satisfaction
2. Experience
3. Technical quality
4. Perceived effectiveness
5. Perceived usefulness
6. Impact of telemedicine on patient-clinician interaction and how it compares to an in-person visit.

Table 1 defines these constructs and provides examples of question topics that map to them.

**Table 1: Common Survey Constructs, Definitions and Possible Domains**

Construct	Definition	Possible Domains
<b>Satisfaction</b>	Evaluation about whether the user's expectations were met	-Overall satisfaction -Willingness to use in the future
<b>Experience</b>	Evaluation of the user's experience of the telemedicine service (e.g., perception of wait time, level of patient centeredness)	-Patient-reported experience measures -Comfort/ease -Patient-centeredness
<b>Technical quality</b>	Evaluation of the quality of the technology used	-Audio and/or picture quality -Interface quality -Reliability -Usability/ease of use -Privacy and security
<b>Perceived effectiveness</b>	Assessment that the telemedicine visit helped improve the health status or wellbeing of the patient	-Change in health status -Measures of health or wellbeing -Patient empowerment

		-Patient knowledge -Patient-reported outcomes measures
<b>Perceived usefulness</b>	Assessment that the telemedicine visit produced some benefit or achieved the purpose of the visit	-Convenience -Time consequences -Cost consequences -Accessibility -Effect on continuity of care -Acceptability
<b>Impact of telemedicine on patient-clinician interaction/comparison to in-person visit</b>	Assessment that the modality affected patient-clinician interaction and/or similarity of telemedicine to an in-person interaction	-Ease of communication -Ability to conduct physical exam -Completeness of information -Preference for telemedicine vs. in-person

A short patient experience and satisfaction survey could include questions across some or all domains, such as the following:

1. Past experience with telemedicine (e.g., first time use) (Experience)
2. Overall rating of satisfaction with telemedicine provider/physician (Satisfaction)  
AND/OR overall rating of satisfaction with the telemedicine visit (Satisfaction)
3. Quality of communication with telemedicine provider/physician (Impact of telemedicine on patient-clinician interaction)
4. Technical problems encountered (if any) (Technical quality)
5. Telemedicine benefits (Perceived usefulness)
6. Ease of participating in a visit (Experience)
7. Intention to use telemedicine in the future (Satisfaction)
8. Likelihood of recommending telemedicine to someone else (Perceived usefulness)
9. Open-ended question on how the experience could be improved

## SECTION 2: NEW PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION SURVEY

Below is a patient experience and satisfaction survey RAND developed. It was developed to capture multiple domains of telemedicine experience and satisfaction in a clear, user-friendly manner. You may adapt this survey to meet the needs of your health center.

### Patient Satisfaction Survey

XXX clinic requests your help. Please complete the following survey based on the telemedicine services you received today. Telemedicine is visit over video with a healthcare provider who is in a different location. Thank you for your time.

1) Have you ever used telemedicine (visit over video) before today?      Yes      No

2) Tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, and 4= strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
My telemedicine visit was easy to schedule				
My telemedicine visit started on time				
The healthcare provider I saw over telemedicine explained things in a way that was easy to understand				
The healthcare provider I saw over telemedicine listened carefully to me				
The healthcare provider I saw over telemedicine spent enough time with me				
I could see the healthcare provider clearly during the telemedicine visit				
I could hear the healthcare provider clearly when he/she spoke to me				
This telemedicine visit was as good as an in-person visit				
I would have received better quality care if I had seen the healthcare provider in person				
Telemedicine made it easier for me to see a healthcare provider today				
Overall, I was satisfied with this telemedicine visit				
I would use telemedicine services again				

3) If this health center could improve one thing about your telemedicine visit experience, what would it be?

Please write your answer here:

### SECTION 3: ANNOTATED INSTRUMENTS

This section contains surveys we received from health centers involved in CHCF's telehealth initiative. We edited these surveys (additions highlighted in red) to improve clarity and interpretation of the results. We provide comments after each survey to explain the suggested edits.

---

#### SURVEY 1

Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

XXX clinic requests your help. Please complete the Patient Satisfaction Survey below based on the telemedicine services you had today. Telemedicine is a live visit with a doctor using video. Learning about your experience will help us improve our services. Thank you for your time.

On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, please rate the questions below:

	Poor				Excellent
Rate your overall satisfaction with your telemedicine experience today	1	2	3	4	5
Rate the clarity of the information you got from your telemedicine physician today	1	2	3	4	5
Rate your overall satisfaction with the telemedicine physician you saw today	1	2	3	4	5
Rate the effectiveness of telemedicine as a way to receive specialty medical care	1	2	3	4	5

How did you get here today?

- Own Car
- Bus
- Taxi
- Family member or Friend
- Walked
- Uber/Lyft
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your feedback



## Explanation of Suggested Edits:

- We added an introduction and a definition of telemedicine. Having a clear description of telemedicine helps to ensure that the patient is including only the experience or visit you want to measure and will promote consistent interpretation of question across all the patients who answer the survey.
- We introduced “parallel construction” for each question to increase readability and reduce cognitive burden for survey responders. Parallel construction is when all questions use similar language and the same scale. We also labeled the responses 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) to improve patient understanding of the scale.
- We reordered the questions so questions about telemedicine providers are grouped together. This reduces cognitive burden on patients.
- We deleted the final question (“If you had not been able to get to this appointment...”), because it is not ideal to ask a hypothetical question about a decision the patient did not actually face. One alternative is to ask what patients did in the past when they had a similar health care need.

---

## SURVEY 2

Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

XXX clinic requests your help. Please complete the Patient Satisfaction Survey below based on the telemedicine services you had today. Telemedicine is a live visit with a doctor using video. Learning about your experience will help us improve our services. Thank you for your time.

1. Is this your first experience with telemedicine?                      Yes                      No

*On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, please rate the questions below:*

	<i>Poor</i>				<i>Excellent</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Rate your overall satisfaction with your telemedicine experience today</i>					
<i>Rate your overall satisfaction with your telemedicine experience today</i>					
<i>Rate the clarity of the information you got from your telemedicine physician today</i>					

5. Would you recommend a telemedicine visit to your friends and family?    Yes    No

6. Is there anything we can do to improve your telemedicine experience? Please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Explanation of Suggested Edits:

- The introduction was written at a high reading level. We revised to make it simpler and added a definition of telemedicine. Having a clear description of telemedicine helps to ensure that the patient is including only the experience or visit you want to measure and will promote consistent interpretation of question across all the patients who answer the survey.
- We introduced “parallel construction” for each question to increase readability and reduce cognitive burden for survey responders. Parallel construction is when all questions use similar language and the same scale.
- We rephrased question #5 (“How likely are you to recommend...”) because the answer choices of poor through excellent did not apply.

## SURVEY 3

XXX clinic requests your help. Please complete the Patient Satisfaction Survey below based on the telemedicine services you had today. Telemedicine is a live visit with a doctor using video. Learning about your experience will help us improve our services. Thank you for your time.

1. How would you rate your **satisfaction with your** overall experience **with telemedicine** today?

1	2	3	4
Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied

2. How clearly did the telemedicine physician communicate information?

1	2	3	4
Very Unclear	Somewhat Unclear	Somewhat Clear	Very Clear

- ### 3. How effective is telemedicine as a way to receive medical care?

1	2	3	4
Very Ineffective	Somewhat Ineffective	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective

4. How likely are you to recommend this **telemedicine** to your friends and family?

1	2	3	4
Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely

5. We appreciate hearing your thoughts or comments about your **telemedicine** visit:

--

## Explanation of Suggested Edits:

- We added an introduction and a definition of telemedicine. Having a clear description of telemedicine helps to ensure that the patient is including only the experience or visit you want to measure and will promote consistent interpretation of question across all the patients who answer the survey.
- We removed the neutral option from the 1-5 scale and replaced it with a 1-4 scale. Some survey experts recommend requiring respondents to give an opinion/non-neutral response. This is the case because individuals usually have some opinion, and it is helpful to structure the survey so they are directed to reveal it.
- Consider writing the questions so that the same response options/likert scale applies for all questions (e.g., rate from poor to excellent; not satisfied to very satisfied). It is confusing for respondents to answer questions with different response options for each question. See previous surveys for examples.
- We deleted former question #5 ("If you were not able to get this appointment..."). It is not ideal to ask a hypothetical question about a decision the patient did not actually face. You are unlikely to get good data due to a variety of biases such as consistency bias (i.e., if an individual took an action, they are likely to say would have taken a different action vs. done nothing). Consider replacing this question with a question on what patients did in the past when they had a similar health care need.

---

## SURVEY 4

Clinic Location:

Specialty:

Date:

---

XXX clinic requests your help. Please complete the Patient Satisfaction Survey below based on the thelehealth services you had today. Telehealth is a live visit with a doctor using video. Learning about your experience will help us improve our services. Thank you for your time.

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 1 indicating you strongly disagree and 4 indicating you strongly agree.

---

1. I feel the **telehealth** specialist was able to understand my condition

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. I find telehealth an acceptable way of receiving health care.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I felt comfortable talking about my healthcare issues using telehealth services.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. Using telehealth services instead of seeing a specialist in-person saved me travel time.

1  
Strongly  
Disagree

2  
Disagree

3  
Agree

4  
Strongly  
Agree

5. I would use telehealth services again if needed

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe

☐ No

6. Overall I was satisfied with today's telehealth visit.

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe

☐ No

Comments and Suggestions:

---

---

---

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is valued and very much appreciated!

#### Explanation of Suggested Edits:

- We modified the introduction and added a definition of telemedicine to the introduction. Having a clear description of telemedicine helps to ensure that the patient is including only the experience or visit you want to measure and will promote consistent interpretation of question across all the patients who answer the survey.
- We modified the scale. The older version of scale had 3 positive responses and 1 negative response. It is best practice for response scales used to measure attitude or agreement to present a balance between positive and negative responses.
- We edited the questions so that each addressed one concept only (i.e., edited double barreled questions) and mapped to the response options.

---

## SURVEY 5

XXX clinic requests your help. Please complete the Patient Satisfaction Survey below based on the telehealth services you had today. Telehealth is a live visit with a doctor using video. Learning about your experience will help us improve our services. Thank you for your time.

1. How easy was it to schedule your **telehealth** appointment? (Please circle your answers below)

1	2	3	4
Very Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Somewhat Easy	Very Easy

2. How satisfied were you with being seen **through telehealth instead of in-person**?

1	2	3	4
Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very satisfied

3. How satisfied were you with the way your physician/therapist communicated information about your care?

1	2	3	4
Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very satisfied

4. Overall, how satisfied were you with the physician/therapist you saw?

1	2	3	4
Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very satisfied

5. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your telehealth session today?

1	2	3	4
Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very satisfied



6. How likely are you to recommend telehealth to others?

1

2

3

4

Very Unlikely

Somewhat Unlikely

Somewhat Likely

Very Likely

7. We appreciate hearing your thoughts about your telehealth visit. Please use the space below for any suggestions or comments:

Thank you for your feedback!

### Explanation of Suggested Edits:

- We added an introduction and a definition of telehealth/telemedicine to the introduction. Having a clear description of telehealth/telemedicine helps to ensure that the patient is including only the experience or visit you want to measure and will promote consistent interpretation of question across all the patients who answer the survey.
- We removed the neutral option from the 1-5 scale and replacing it with a 1-4 scale. Many survey experts recommend requiring respondents to give an opinion/non-neutral response. This is the case because individuals usually have some opinion, and it is helpful to structure the survey so they are directed to reveal it.
- It is ideal to use the same term throughout to refer to the visit, so we removed "live video visit" and replaced it with telehealth.