

Coming Soon...

Telemedicine/Telehealth

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This morning, as I sat in a doctor's office waiting, I learned that the dollar value of my lost time seeking medical care was valued at \$43¹, more than the \$32 average out-of-pocket cost for the actual care! This figure is based on a typical doctor visit expending 121 minutes seeking care; 37 minutes of travel, 64 minutes waiting for care or completing forms, and only 20 minutes of actual face time. My actual time was significantly longer, and I hate to think of what the actual dollar value of my lost time really cost (128 minutes of travel, 32 minutes waiting for care and 47 minutes of face-to-face time). It really had me thinking about more convenient and efficient ways I could access care, if only I had the tools.

As technology continues to advance and deliver convenience in many facets of our lives, why shouldn't our health care likewise evolve? Perhaps you have experienced the convenience of an Urgent Care Clinic, saving you time and money for simple conditions such as a sinus infection or a sore throat. **What if you could save time, money and not have to leave home** for those types of conditions or even to engage a behavioral therapist to help you through a difficult time such as a divorce? **Telemedicine/Telehealth is on its way!**

Telemedicine/Telehealth uses technology to medically evaluate, diagnosis and treat patients. It can come in the form of an online portal, videoconference, telephone call or email communication, all designed to facilitate communication between a doctor and patient conveniently, affordably, and efficiently. While not the same as physically visiting a doctor's office, a telemedicine/telehealth visit can prove beneficial to ward off illness or disease, to help stabilize a condition until a patient is able to reach a hospital, or to even monitor a patient with a chronic illness at home.

Powered by technological advances and in response to society's demands for access to convenient care, telemedicine/telehealth has advantages, but it's not a complete replacement for face-to-face health care. Telemedicine/Telehealth is a step forward in health care delivery that can supplement traditional channels. Local providers, such as Children's Hospital, have been using telemedicine/telehealth and their success is spreading. Managed Care Networks, both local and national, have been evaluating its advantages to bridge access, convenience, distance and yes, time, for patients in need of medical care. It's only a matter of time before we all will have another option to access care conveniently, efficiently and affordably, and I can't wait.

¹ [It costs you \\$43 every time you wait for the doctor](#), Felice J. Freyer, Boston Globe, October 6, 2015