

## 2013 APTA Conference and Expo in Salt Lake City, UT June 28, 2013, Friday, 3:45 pm – 5:15 pm

<http://www.apta.org/Conference/Programming/2013/Technology/>

### Embracing Technology, Enhancing Therapy with Telehealth: Patient Care Outside the Clinic

#### Welcome to the future

Within next five to ten years, we'll practice in a healthcare environment where health-related services and information via telecommunications technologies *follow the consumer* wherever they go throughout the healthcare system. We'll have care that is *value-derived* and actually *coordinated* across settings. Healthcare decisions will be made together by patients and providers with technology tools that *assist* and *guide* them in the process. As a result of this new reality, we'll target care and case management of diseases thereby facilitating access to care and improving the health of patients.<sup>1,2</sup> Oh, and it will cost a whole lot less than the system we have now.

#### What does this have to do with Telehealth technology?

Good question. Actually, a lot of people, including President Obama, President Bush (before him), and the CMS are now convinced that telehealth and other uses of health information technology (HIT) are essential to achieving that kind of imagined health system. It was way back in the 1960's that we had the first scientific studies of telecommunications in healthcare and ten years ago the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was one of the first health care systems in the United States to implement home telehealth services (See VAVideos).<sup>2</sup> Since then, lots of folks have jumped on the bandwagon, including the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) funding \$30 million for more than 800 California clinics and hospitals to establish a statewide medical-grade network of healthcare and emergency services by 2013. In addition, Alaska received a bulk of the FCC funding in the past.

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1. <http://www.northflorida.va.gov/NORTHFLORIDA/services/telehealth/index.asp>
  2. <http://www.telehealth.va.gov/index.asp>

## What is Telehealth?

In short, there is a difference in the definition of telehealth, telemedicine, and telerehabilitation depending on the association, organization, or jurisdiction that provides the definition. And, this is an issue to deal with in our opinion. Also, there are position papers from AOTA, ASHA, and Australian Physiotherapy Association to mention a few. But,

When we say “telehealth” we are talking about *the delivery of health-related services and information via telecommunications technologies*.<sup>3</sup>

Don’t worry, we aren’t talking about telephone and fax machines here.

For example, the California Medical Board<sup>4</sup> defines “telemedicine” as the practice of health care delivery, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, transfer of medical data, and education using interactive audio, video, or data communications. It does not include a telephone conversation or an electronic mail message between a health care practitioner and patient.

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) defines *telehealth*<sup>5</sup> as the use of electronic communications to provide and deliver a host of health-related information and health care services, including, but not limited to, physical therapy related information and services, over large and small distances. Telehealth may be used to provide health education and advice, communicate patient reminders, monitor clinical status, or deliver interventions.

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) defines *telerehabilitation*<sup>6</sup> in the larger realm of telehealth as the application of communication technology for supporting rehabilitation services.

To American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), *Telepractice*<sup>7</sup> means the use of telecommunications and information technologies for the exchanges of information from one site to another for the provision of health care to an individual from a provider through hardwire or Internet connection (Maryland regulations at 10.41.06).

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3. <http://www.americantelemed.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3333>
  4. <http://mbc.ca.gov/licensee/telehealth.html>
  5. <http://www.apta.org/PatientCare/Technology/>
  6. [http://www.txsource.net/files/Telerehabilitation\\_Position\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.txsource.net/files/Telerehabilitation_Position_Paper.pdf)
  7. <http://www.asha.org/practice/telepractice/>

## **Review of current telehealth language**

In this presentation, we will focus on telehealth language from:

1. Alaska (physical and occupational therapy)<sup>8</sup>
2. State of Washington (physical therapy)<sup>9</sup>
3. Texas (Speech Therapy)<sup>10</sup>

The board members and practitioners must be educated in order to protect the consumers from potential misuse, abuse as well as appropriate use. A stellar perspective from psychology is a starting point.<sup>11</sup> The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy is addressing telehealth for physical therapists' intra-state practice now.

## **Are there some clinical examples of telehealth?**

In this presentation, you will see the following physical therapy examples.

Clinical practice examples:

1. Integumentary management podcast<sup>12</sup>
2. Infinity Rehab podcast<sup>13</sup>
3. Rehab Engineering collaboration podcast<sup>14</sup>

## **Demonstration**

Pre-screening

Informed consent

Technology (real-time vs. store-and-forward)

Documentation

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8. <http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/occ/pub/PT-OTStatutes.pdf>
  9. <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=246-915-187>
  10. [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/speech/sp\\_rules.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/speech/sp_rules.shtm)
  11. <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/pro/39/5/473/>
  12. <http://www.apta.org/Podcasts/2012/8/15/Telehealth/>
  13. <http://www.apta.org/Podcasts/2012/9/25/Telehealth/>
  14. <http://www.apta.org/Podcasts/2012/12/13/Telehealth/>

## Conclusion

Telehealth opportunity in therapy can enhance access to service and address provider shortage in certain settings. As adoption of technology is destined to increase, therapists should collaborate with providers in medicine, nursing, and rehabilitation engineering to generate telehealth research, practice, and education.

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### Speakers for the course:

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| Jason A. Craig, DPhil, BSc (Hons) (Moderator)<br>[jcraig@marymount.edu] |
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| Matt Elrod, PT, DPT, MEd, NCS<br>[mattelrod@apta.org] |
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| Alan Lee, PT, PhD, DPT, CWS, GCS<br>[allee@msmc.la.edu] |
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## Postscript

This handout corresponds to the presentation, mostly for those of you who couldn't make the session. Obviously, it isn't our slides, because they wouldn't be very helpful to you - they are designed to *supplement* the presentation, not *substitute* for the presentation.

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