



University of California  
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# Platforms for Telemedicine

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# What is Telemedicine?

- CMS defines it as the *“exchange of medical information from one site to another through electronic communication to improve a patient’s health.”*
- Due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, Medicare has expanded its payment for telemedicine services
  - Now can use telemedicine to replace office and hospital visits in any setting (including patient’s home)

# Types of Telemedicine Visits

- **Video visits** (aka: “Medicare telehealth visits”)
  - New AND Established patients
- **Telephone visits** (aka: “Virtual check-ins”)
  - Established patients only!
- **E-mail or secure messaging** through your EMR (aka: E-visits”)
  - Established patients only!
  - Patient has to initiate communication

# Video Visits

- “Interactive audio and video telecommunications system that permits real-time communication between the provider and the patient at home.”
- Due to the COVID-19 crisis, Medicare now considers these visits the same as in-person visits → paid at the same rate as regular, in-person visits (using E&M coding)
- **For New Patient visits, this is the ONLY way you can charge for your visit**



# Video Visits: Platforms

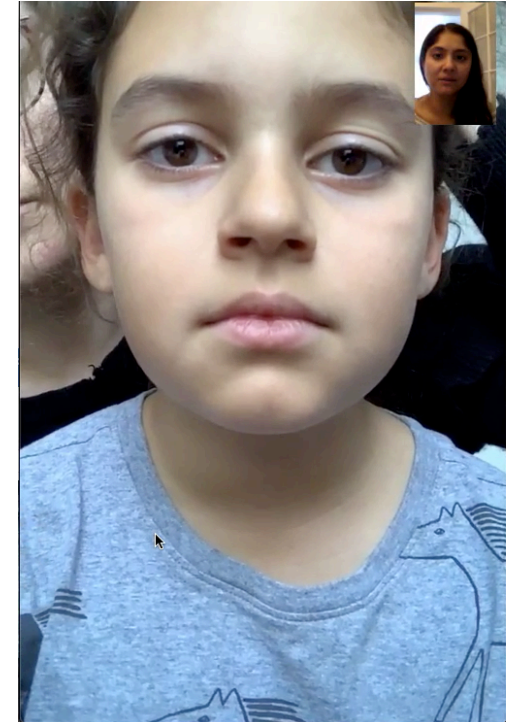
- Before, video visits needed to be done through HIPAA-compliant platforms
  - Zoom for Healthcare (\$200/mo)
  - Vsee (\$49/mo)
  - Doxyme Pro (\$35/mo)
- During the COVID-19 public health crisis, “the HHS Office for Civil Rights will waive penalties for HIPAA violations against health care providers that serve patients in good faith through everyday communications technologies, such as FaceTime or Skype”

# Video Visits: FREE Platforms

- FaceTime
- Whatsapp
- Skype
- Google Hangouts
- Doxyme (free)
- Zoom (free)

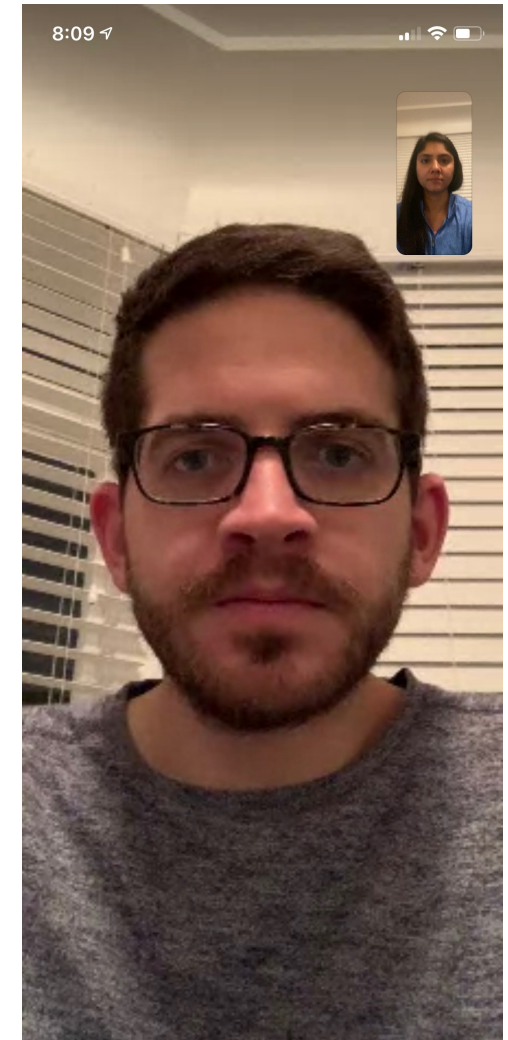
# Video Visits: Facetime

PROS	CONS
User friendly and accessible if patient has an Apple device	<b>Patients will have access to your personal number!</b>
Unlimited calls between Apple devices	Cannot use if both parties do not have Apple device
Can add multiple people onto call (as long as everyone has Apple)	Cannot share screen (if you want to show them something)
	Cannot record, save, or share video



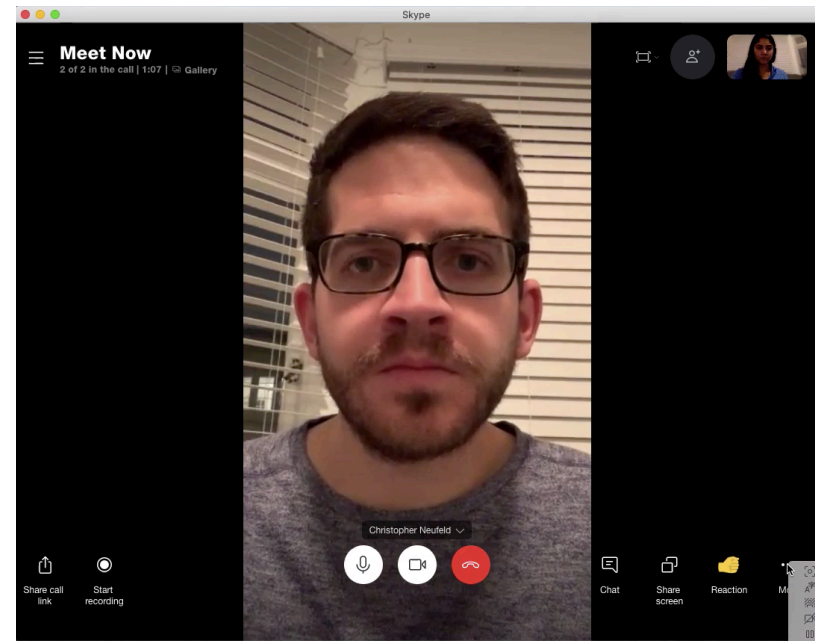
# Video Visits: Whatsapp

PROS	CONS
User friendly/ easy if familiar with Whatsapp	<b>Patients will have access to your personal number!</b>
Make calls between iPhone, Android, etc.	Cannot use if both parties do not have Whatsapp
Unlimited calls between Whatsapp accounts through Wifi	Cannot share screen (if you want to show them something)
Add multiple people onto call (as long as everyone has Whatsapp)	Cannot record, save, or share video



# Video Visits: Skype

PROS	CONS
Make calls between iPhone, Android, etc.	<b>Patients will have access to your personal number!</b>
Unlimited calls between Skype accounts through Wifi	Cannot use video if both parties do not have <u>Skype account and application</u>
Add multiple people onto call (as long as everyone has Skype)	More unfamiliar to many users
Share your computer screen with patients	
Closed captioning (though a bit slow)	
Record/save video	



# Video Visits: Google Hangout

PROS	CONS
Send patient a link to your meeting → <u>they will NOT have access to personal phone number</u>	Cannot use video if both parties do not have <u>Google account and Hangouts app (if on phone)</u>
Unlimited number of hangouts over wifi	Need to start new meetings for each patient (harder for multiple appointments in one day)
Add multiple people onto call	Cannot record, save, or share video
Share your computer screen with patients	





# Video Visits: Doxyme (Doximity)

PROS	CONS
Can access anyone on any device with internet and camera (patients do not need account)	Cannot add third party (e.g. interpreter) to call unless you upgrade
Send a link to your meeting → <u>they will NOT have access to personal phone or e-mail!</u>	Cannot share your computer screen with patients unless you upgrade
Unlimited 1:1 calls	Cannot record, save, or share video
Virtual waiting room → can schedule multiple patients throughout the day	
HIPAA compliant	



# Video Visits: Zoom

## PROS

Can access anyone on any device with internet and camera (patients do not need account)

Send a link to your meeting → they will NOT have access to personal phone or e-mail!

Unlimited 1:1 calls

Can add third party, but limited to 40min/meeting

Virtual waiting room → can schedule multiple patients throughout the day

Can share your computer screen with patients

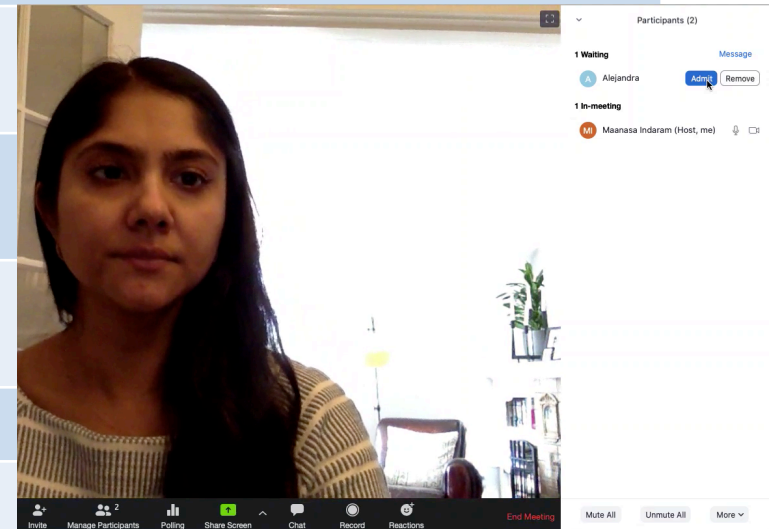
Can record, save, and share video call

HIPAA compliant

## CONS

Group calls ( $\geq 3$ ) limited to 40min/day unless you upgrade

Cannot dial out to phone (e.g. interpreter) unless you upgrade



# Comparison of Free Video Platforms

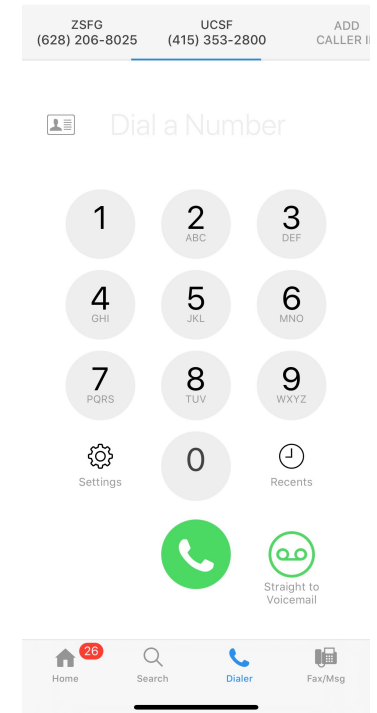
	Concealed phone number	Can use between different devices	Patient does not need an account	Can add multiple parties to call	Share screen available	Can record/ save video or photos	Closed captions available	Virtual waiting room	HIPAA compliant
FaceTime				x					
Whatsapp		x		x					
Skype		x		x	x	x	x		
Google Hangout	x	x		x	x				
Doxy.me	x	x	x					x	x
Zoom	x	x	x	x (limited 40 min/ meeting)	x	x		x	x

# Telephone Visits

- Patient must be ESTABLISHED to your practice
- Have to spend minimum 5 minutes on the call
- The call cannot be related to an appointment or procedure done in the office within the last 7 days
- Cannot bill if you recommend an in office appointment the next day or even the the next available appointment

# Telephone Visits: FREE Platforms

- \*67 before your number
  - Will show up as a Private number to your patients
- Create a Google Voice account
- Use Doximity Dialer on the Doximity application
  - Patient sees your office number when calling (you can set whichever number you want)



# Summary

- Many restrictions have been lifted due to the COVID public health crisis
- Providers can now use readily available/free software and applications for telemedicine efforts (both video and telephone encounters)
- Some helpful features with “Pro versions,” but you certainly don’t need them!
  - Many groups and hospitals already have a telehealth platform with which they are contracted