COVID-19 Student Telehealth Support Initiative
Yash Varma, Mary White, Alexandra Leto
Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

What’s the Problem?
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many TJUH offices and departments experienced a significant increase in their reliance on telehealth services to continue providing care to their patients. This rapid adoption of an entirely novel model of care expectedly resulted in technical difficulties experienced by patients, causing appointment delays, cancellations, and an increased phone call burden on front office staff.

With clinical rotations for SKMC students briefly suspended, an opportunity was noted to partner SKMC students with TJUH departments to help improve the patient experience and address common concerns faced by the offices.

Improvement Strategy
SKMC students partnered with numerous TJUH departments and developed a telehealth support initiative to:
• Help TJUH patients navigate the telehealth system
• Reduce system-wide appointment delays experienced by patients
• Provide direction to COVID-19 resources

A Volunteer Script was prepared to help patients troubleshoot common issues with accessing the telehealth system and provide up to date recommendations from the CDC to remain safe.

Student Volunteer Telehealth Support Script

Hello, my name is [INSERT NAME], and I am a Medical Student at Jefferson. I am working with [insert Department Name Here]. I noticed that you have an upcoming appointment scheduled through our telehealth system. Is this your first-time using telehealth at Jefferson?

IF NO:
Great! Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions regarding the tele-health system or its use?

IF YES:
1. We are calling all of our patients scheduled for a telehealth visit proactively to ensure that their visit runs as smoothly as possible. I would love to run through a few screening questions with you to make sure everything is set up and ready to go. Would this be an okay time to talk?
   a. If NO – Note in spreadsheet what their contact information is and what time works best for them. One of the students working with that department will sign themselves up to call back at that time
2. If YES – Alright! My first question for you is, which device are you planning to complete your visit with? A computer/ desktop or an iPhone/ Android enabled device?
   a. Refer to link for more detailed instructions regarding either mode: https://hospitals.jefferson.edu/jeffconnect/how-to-use/scheduled-video-visits/html57-
      android

4. Have you activated your MyChart account from the e-mail that was sent to your preferred email address when the appointment was scheduled?
   a. If NO – refer to link on how to assist them through this

5. Are you able to see the “Appointments” tab? Please select it.

6. Great! On the day of your visit, please return to this tab 15-30 minutes before your scheduled appointment to begin your visit. Do you have any additional questions at this time?

IF DESKTOP/ LAPTOP

7. Have you activated your MyChart account from the e-mail that was sent to your preferred email address when the appointment was scheduled?
   a. If NO – refer to link on how to assist them through this

8. Please log into your account and select “Future Appointments” under the “Visit” tab
   a. Refer to Link above for steps on how to log into account.

9. At this time, you should be able to see the upcoming visit in the list. Are you able to see this?

10. Great! On the day of your visit, please return to this tab 15-30 minutes before your scheduled appointment to begin your visit. Do you have any additional questions at this time?

Closing the Encounter
11. If patients inquire about COVID-19: Please visit the CDC website for more information on COVID-19.
   a. https://www.health.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx
      complications.html#how-supplies-on-hand

12. Current recommendations at this time are as follows:
   a. Keep a 6-foot distance when talking with others.
   b. Wash hands for 20 seconds.
   c. Take your temperature if you are concerned that you may be coming down with something.

13. Finally, you can call the office or use the MyChart portal to talk with clinician before coming in for a sick visit. As I mentioned before, do not come to the doctor’s office for an illness with a fever or cough without calling first. We are committed to following this situation as it evolves and keeping you safe and informed. We are here for you and want to address your concerns and questions.

Patients were instructed on navigating the system, accessing their appointment, and provided day of appointment instructions. CDC recommendations for COVID-19 were also reinforced.