



Building a Modern Health Care System: Recommendations from the COVID-19 Federal Policy Work Group

The following summarizes the Work Group's recommendations for building a technology-enabled health care system to meet the challenges of COVID-19 and future pandemics.

An Overview

1) Telehealth and Remote Patient Monitoring

- a. Permanently remove Medicare telehealth reimbursement restrictions:
 - Remove obsolete restrictions on the location of the patient
 - Maintain and enhance HHS authority to determine appropriate providers and services for telehealth
 - Ensure Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics can furnish telehealth
 - Make permanent HHS temporary waiver authority during emergencies services after the public health emergency (PHE)
- b. Promote cross-state provider license portability
 - Incentivize interstate provider licensure compacts that include mutual recognition
 - Ensure existing federal grants only fund work towards mutual recognition interstate licensure compacts
- c. Remove barriers to the on-going utilization of remote patient monitoring devices
 - Make permanent regulations that RPM devices can be furnished to both new and existing patients and patients with both chronic and acute conditions
 - Establish permanent Stark and Anti-Kickback Statute safe-harbors that allow for providers to waive cost-sharing

At the eHealth Initiative (eHI), our mission is to convene stakeholders seeking to transform the health care system through innovation. At a time of immense challenge to our health care system, it is also a time to learn, discuss, and work toward a future where public policy supports the safe and effective use of technology in health care to increase access and lower costs. That is why eHI invited our members, many of whom are at the frontlines of fighting COVID-19, to join a special work group – the COVID-19 Federal Policy Work Group – to help craft a report with a set of recommendations to fully leverage health IT and digital health to fight COVID-19 and future public health challenges.

Over the course of four months, the Work Group met to discuss and form policy recommendations on five major issue areas: telehealth and remote patient monitoring; artificial intelligence and machine learning; broadband; health information exchange; and public health surveillance. If implemented by policymakers, these recommendations will help shape a modern, flexible, and technology-enabled health care system.

2) Broadband

- a. Provide additional federal funding and remove barriers to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) COVID-19 Telehealth Program
- b. Sustain and expand current federal government investment in rural broadband

3) Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

- a. Increase federal funding for research and testing for use of AI/ML tools in three areas:
 - Research
 - Treatment
 - Public health
- b. Federal government agencies should continue to collaborate amongst themselves and with private sector partners to produce best practices and adopt industry standards for data quality and validation for purposes of AI and ML

4) Health Information Exchange and Interoperability

- a. Establish a permanent 100-percent Medicaid match rate for health information exchange activities
- b. Better align federal regulations related to health information exchange and lab reporting standards

5) Public Health Surveillance

- a. Study the potential outcomes of moving from a vertical public health surveillance system to an integrated public health surveillance system
- b. Restore and protect funding for the federal Prevention and Public Health Fund

