

Community Health Workers Help Patients Use Telehealth

Community health workers support the health care needs of their community and can help patients learn about telehealth.



Who are community health workers (CHWs)?

CHWs have many roles, such as digital health navigators. Below are some of the ways CHWs are uniquely able to build trust with the people they support to access telehealth:

- ▶ Coordinate access to telehealth services in a patient's preferred language
- ▶ Ensure the patient feels included and empowered to make health care decisions using telehealth
- ▶ Arrange needed health care and social services, including exploring online resources
- ▶ Promote the use of preventive care with telehealth and online tools
- ▶ Manage chronic conditions, such as diabetes, with telehealth

Why are community health workers important for telehealth?

CHWs help community members feel more comfortable with using telehealth. They support communication and teach technical skills to help community members connect with providers. CHWs can perform the below tasks:



Call before a scheduled telehealth visit to ensure the patient is comfortable using telehealth. CHWs can check on whether the patient would like a medical interpreter, assistive device, or other support to help with communication. CHWs can also call the patient after a telehealth visit to find out how well the technology worked and what could help improve a future telehealth visit.



Perform a walk-through pre-visit virtually or in the patient's home. CHWs can ensure technology equipment is working, such as the camera, speakers, microphone, and internet access. They can also check the space in the home for appropriate lighting and whether it is private.



Bridge the gap between patients and providers as part of the telehealth workforce team. For example, CHWs can share information about the patient with their provider to help address specific challenges that the patient may have difficulty communicating.



Explain that telehealth visits are private, and what patients can do to [protect personal health data](#).

Resources for integrating community health workers in your telehealth practice

It is important for CHWs to be familiar with telehealth technologies and workflows so they can help the communities and patients they serve. Below are recommended tools and trainings for CHWs:

- [On the Front Lines of Health Equity](#) (PDF) – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- [CHW Digital Navigator Toolkit](#) (PDF) – Telehealth Resource Centers