

Issues to consider with integration of telemedicine

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(HealthDay)—Integrating telemedicine raises various considerations, including operational and legal issues, according to an article published July 24 in *Medical Economics*.

Getting started in [telemedicine](#) does not have to necessitate a huge outlay. According to *Medical Economics*, although basic web cameras are inexpensive, [software systems](#) need to be encrypted and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act-compliant. Integrating telemedicine into practice also raises operational issues, such as when to see patients, scheduling, and guidelines for use.

Legal issues also face physicians using telemedicine, and these include

physician licensing, malpractice liability, online prescribing, informed consent, and credentialing and privileging. In some areas, telemedicine is slow to grow, but the advantages for patients mean it is likely to grow significantly. Areas where telemedicine can help include mental health follow-ups, urgent care visits, and management of chronic conditions.

"Telemedicine in primary care is used for a wide assortment of non-emergency problems for [patients](#) who want a doctor's advice but don't necessarily need to see him or her right away," according to the article. "Telehealth doesn't replace face-to-face encounters with physicians. Instead, it can augment the doctor/patient relationship."

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