



Telehealth: An Introduction

What is telehealth?

Telehealth is a general term to describe health education, assessments, and care delivered through technology. Patients and caregivers are in one location while healthcare practitioners are elsewhere. It can involve different technologies (ie, mobile or laptop), platforms (ie, Whatsapp, Skype, Zoom), and protocols (ie, speech therapy, oral health, psychosocial support).

Why is telehealth important?

It is seen as an effective tool when patients live far from their healthcare facilities and/or the care they need can be provided remotely. It can save time, travel, and much-needed resources for families, even empowering them to keep up with treatments and care recommendations. It can also help conserve hospital space, staff, and resources for tertiary or emergent care. This is especially important in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Why is telehealth important for Smile Train partners and their patients?

Smile Train estimates that a baby is born with a cleft every three minutes around the world. These babies and their families need immediate support and attention. Also, many children affected by cleft are in need of ongoing speech therapy, oral health education, and psychosocial support services. Telecare can offer support to these families while also saving travel resources and helping to avoid exposure to COVID-19.