

Thanks for your participation in the 5/26/20 version of COVID in 20: Virtual Care Anywhere – PT and Audiology Leading the Charge. Thanks especially to our colleagues for sharing their experience and wisdom with us.

We value your time, so we want to make sure to keep to the 20-minute timeframe. This will limit our ability to answer all questions on the call, so here are answers to questions posed during the COVID in 20. A special thanks to Rachel McArdle - National Director, Audiology and Speech Pathology and Mark Havran - Director, Rehabilitation & Extended Care VA Central Iowa HCS for answering the following questions. Below this set of questions are other bits of information shared during the call and two presentations shared by the presenters.

Q: How many air exchanges are recommended per minute in the OR during and afterwards for clean-up in a COVID positive case?

A: The Moving Forward Plan has this information as well as additional information on procedural planning for COVID + patients.

Q: I was asked today for enterprise wide guidance on safety in education. Has anyone prepared that?

A: If this is related to providing education in a safe environment, my suggestion would be to follow local guidance on social distancing, screening, and PPE. If the question is if telemedicine can give education to Veterans, caregivers, and staff, this is being done in many ways. Utilizing telehealth for lifting safety, transfer training, safe patient handling, and the ability to ensure that someone is doing their home exercises safely.

Q: Dr McArdle, are you working jointly at all with DoD on this work?

A: (Havran) I know this was directed at Dr. McArdle, I wanted to mention that VA has had Physical Therapists partner with DHA for Vestibular treatments and Audiologists are a part of that thru the Hearing Center of Excellence. They hold joint meetings. Karen Skop is a great contact for PT related to that.

A: (McArdle) The DOD uses the VA National Hearing Aid Contracts and have access to the same software that allows for remote programming; however, VA and DOD have their own cybersecurity measures, approval processes, and other IT restrictions. To my knowledge, this has not been approved yet through DOD.

Q: Any hurdles with virtual PT?

The hurdles are like what other specialties notice: Initial equipment, working with Veteran and facility telehealth leads to ensure bandwidth, scheduling, and training. Ultimately, it comes down to “buy in” from the provider and the Veterans served. Scheduling is becoming more of a concern as we try to coordinate face-to-face visits with tele visits, and the number of schedules that may or may not need viewed or “blocked out”. An open scheduling grid may assist with this. There is an excellent opportunity to balance schedule between face to face and tele PT to ensure clinic and waiting area distancing as we return to a new normal.

Q: Great innovation, is this available across the VA, if not will it be?

A: (Havran) Yes, tele physical Therapy is available. Reach out to Mark Havran and he can put you in contact with an individual in your locality.

A: (McArdle) Remote programming of hearing aids is an enterprise solution and is available across VHA.

Q: How well can range of motion be assessed with virtual PT?

A: There are several computer programs that attempt to measure ROM virtually. VA does not have one vendor for this. You may see this in some private sector functional capacity exams or software to measure angles for athletic performance. Normally, it is best to view a “functional” rom. For example, shoulder ROM above 90, 120, or hip, knee, and ankle as it relates to gait or transfers. Functionally, they can be viewed quite well with the equipment we have available. If specific and detailed ROM is needed, this may be an opportunity when a face-to-face is needed throughout the course of treatment.

Q: Wondering if the elderly rural Veterans can visit CBOC for hearing aid assistance - instead of driving into main facility -if they need help and/or are not smart phone savvy?

A: If the CBOC offers audiology either through face-to-face or through telehealth, yes, the Veteran can visit the CBOC for hearing aid assistance. We have found through initial testing that many elderly Veterans have been able to utilize the remote programming apps without issue as long as they have WiFi and a smart device. The apps are very user friendly and the audiologists have been successful in walking through technical issues with Veterans

Presentations:

Teleaudiology – Bridging the Accessibility Gap



Audiology
Telehealth COVID in

Physical Therapy



covid 20 call
Physical Therapy.ppt

Additional comments:

- OR are typically 15 ACH per HICPAC so about 18 min for 99% efficiency and 28 min for 99.9% efficiency.
- Some of our veterans also just like that in person care.... dealing with and older generation... they like to see us in person
- This may be the way to do adjustments going forward... will definitely reduce the number of office visits required!
- is HUGE for minor adjustments on hearing aids for sure!

- That sounds like an amazing service.
- Very creative and veteran centric. Great work!
- As a VA employee, and a recipient of audiology and PT services from VA, I'm glad to hear of these steps forward!!
- We are doing in home evaluation.
- Thanks for pushing this innovation over the finish line Rachel - great option for many!
- Will certainly change the walk -in clinics everywhere
- California Kaiser Health System does virtual PT visits - many times just talking about how the exercises are working, changing frequency or intensity
- I think we will see virtual PT integrated with face to face PT become the standard of care in the future.
- This will help encourage patients to complete their exercise programs after completing skilled therapy
- My PT told me I was the only who had ever done all their "homework". What a great way to support compliance with the plan of care!
- We have a technician and an audiologist that goes at least once a week to each of our CBOCs... I am at Central Iowa, VISN23
- Interesting review of teleaudiology at: <https://www.audiology.org/audiology-today-julyaugust-2020/tele-audiology-pandemic-and-beyond-flexibility-and-suitability>
- This is something I knew nothing about prior to COVID
- We also have Telehealth carts at all our CBOCs
- These innovations are inspiring. fantastic work.