Mya Flores

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CSON Module 8

Question:

In rural areas, how does implementing telehealth compared to in person appointments improve patients' health and wellness?

Summary:

Telehealth consists of a variety of telecommunication technologies to provide quality health services from a distance. Rural populations often face barriers when it comes to healthcare that limit their ability to receive the proper care needed. Barriers such as lack or transportation, lack of finances or health insurance and even workforce shortages. Due to these barriers, rural residents can utilize telehealth to improve their health and wellness. According to *Patient Satisfaction with Telehealth in Rural Settings: A Systematic Review*," Telehealth is important because it provides therapy to underserved populations living in remote areas that are otherwise unavailable for clients." (AOTA, 2018). Rural areas can utilize telehealth for various health related appointments such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, a simple checkup appointment, palliative care, and several other services. "Rehabilitation services provided via telehealth, including occupational and physical therapy, pose a solution to the health care disparity individuals in rural areas face." (Betts et al., 2018). As far as cost and convenience goes for telehealth, *Perceptions of Telehealth vs In-Person Visits Among Older Adults with Advanced Kidney Disease, Care Partners, and Clinicians* states," Patients, care partners, and clinicians described telehealth as more convenient, less costly, and more efficient for patients than clinic visits." (Ladin et al., 2021) Because telehealth has been shown to reduce specific barriers that the

rural population face, telehealth will than in turn improve the overall health and wellness of the rural residents. “Telehealth provides access to resources and care for patients in rural areas or areas with provider shortages, improves efficiency without higher net costs, reduces patient travel and wait times, and allows for comparable or improved quality of care.” (Gajarawala, 2021)

Conclusion:

In conclusion, after further research on the ability for telehealth to improve health and wellness of the rural population, there is a clear indication that telehealth is in fact beneficial for rural residents for many reasons. Telehealth is less costly, does not require transportation, more convenient and allows for comparable and improved quality of care overall. (Gajarawala, 2021) All of the benefits of telehealth directly improve the barriers that come with rural areas and health care.

Work Sited:

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2. Harkey, L. C., Jung, S. M., Newton, E. R., & Patterson, A. (2020). Patient satisfaction with telehealth in rural settings: A systematic review. *International Journal of Telerehabilitation*, *12*(2), 53–64. https://doi.org/10.5195/ijt.2020.6303

3. Ladin, K., Porteny, T., Perugini, J. M., Gonzales, K. M., Aufort, K. E., Levine, S. K., Wong, J. B., Isakova, T., Rifkin, D., Gordon, E. J., Rossi, A., Koch-Weser, S., & Weiner, D. E. (2021). Perceptions of telehealth vs in-person visits among older adults with advanced kidney disease, care partners, and clinicians. *JAMA Network Open*, *4*(12). https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.37193