Telehealth for Gender-affirming Care: Challenges and Opportunities

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Telehealth services for medical care were rarely available in the United States before March 2020 when stay-at-home orders went into place in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Gender-affirming care for transgender and nonbinary (TNB) individuals was no exception, and the pandemic created an opportunity for a new method of delivering gender-affirming health services for the TNB community.

This special issue of *Transgender Health* includes articles that describe various models of telehealth for gender-affirming care (LGBT-focused Federally Qualified Health Center, Planned Parenthood, Pediatric and Adolescent specialty care centers, the U.S. Air Force, and a student-run clinic) and types of services provided (primary care gender-affirming medical care, behavioral health care, voice coaching, and support groups) as well as the promises and challenges of this new mode of care delivery from both the patient (including youth and their caregivers) and provider (pediatric endocrinologists) perspectives.

Despite increasing access to in-person care, this collection clearly demonstrates that in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth may offer advantages as an additional modality for gender-affirming care. Since the emergency orders were put into place by the U.S. federal government and many states, telehealth has allowed for access to gender-affirming medical and mental health care for TNB individuals in geographic areas that may not have appropriately trained providers. In the article by Grasso et al. it is documented that Fenway Health center increased its reach to patients in 24 states.

Journal:

Transgender Health
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