

Telehealth and Digital Tools

EQUITY ASSESSMENT

Under-resourced systems that adopt telehealth platforms or other patient-facing digital tools rapidly, but not comprehensively, have the potential to increase safety vulnerabilities and decrease access for the most marginalized patients or clients. This brief assessment contains questions that health centers can ask potential vendors to ensure their tools support equitable access and address the needs of the health center's population.



01

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

This set of questions focuses on the components of the technology that are likely to present barriers, such as requiring technology or skills that patients may not have.

- Does the platform require an email to use?
- Does the platform require login to use?
- Can the platform be used on various types of devices (e.g., computer, tablet, smartphone)?
- Does the platform require downloading a separate app or browser extension?
- If smartphone-focused, does it work on both Android and iPhone operating systems?
- Does the platform allow for switching from audio/ video to just audio (e.g., in the case that broadband is inadequate or if the client doesn't have sufficient data)?

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

This set of questions focuses on the components of the technology that support access for those with different language or communication needs.

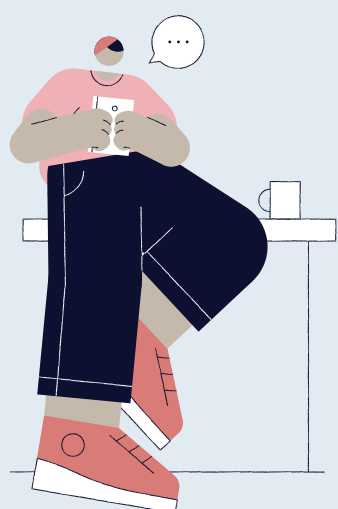
02



- Are instructions for using the platform available in multiple languages?
- How does this platform integrate with interpretation or translation services?
- Does the platform allow an interpreter to join directly? Are providers or support staff able to facilitate that?
- Are instructions available for patients who have limited sight or literacy? For example, are there audio instructions and/ or instructions that are primarily pictures?
- Does the platform have features that support use by patients with limited literacy or sight?
- Does the platform have features that support use by patients with hearing impairment?

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PERSONAL & DATA PRIVACY

This set of questions focuses on both personal and data privacy that is important for protecting patients.

- Does the platform allow for emojis or other non-verbal communication that could allow the patient to communicate that they are not in a private location or that they can't speak about confidential matters?
- Does the platform store user information from the patient (e.g., chat or phone number)?
- Is any information that is captured and stored by the platform used for any other purpose (e.g., is data shared or sold with data brokers or marketers, or is data used to target services or offerings)?
- Does the platform have privacy settings that prevent things like taking screenshots? If so, how are those accessed?

USER FOCUSED

This set of questions focuses on how (or if) the technology addresses the needs of users seen in safety net settings.

04



- Does the vendor or company have any public statement about commitment to digital equity or access?
- Who was the platform developed this platform for, specifically? How has it been adapted for patients with other needs?
- Who has user-tested the platform? (e.g., what populations?)
- Is there tech support that patients can access? How do they access that support?
- Are there any costs that a patient might incur within or as a result of this platform?