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Editor's Perspective



Jasmiry Bennett

NEW SOCIETY NEW NORM

All of the uncertainties around the world have led to increased anxiety and despair. We have heard of how other countries have dealt with pandemics. This is the first time, as a nation, we are experiencing a severe crisis. We could have never imagined a pandemic of this magnitude impacting our world. We have never fa-

thomed the thought of hospital frontline staff not having enough equipment, supplies, and protective gear to care for patients who are sick, yet alone reusing equipment! Were we this ill prepared? Occupational hazard continues to threaten our healthcare professionals more so now than ever before.

During this time, we lean on our leaders for guidance to ensure we have what is needed in order to work safely. In crisis, clear communication is of utmost importance. There is more than money at stake; people's lives have been affected and changed forever. Great leaders view their employees as people first then workers.¹ As our healthcare providers continue to risk their lives and the lives of their families, society should continue adhering to physical distancing. The silver lining is telemedicine has flourished during this time of physical distancing. Chronic illness and conditions have not disappeared and while we are all focused on treating critically ill patient we cannot lose focus of this population. Virtual visits has not only assisted patients with chronic

conditions, but has also provided an avenue for emergency room decompression.

The Center for Medicare Services (CMS) has reduced regulations and restrictions on a temporary and emergency basis under the 1135 waiver authority and Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act.² This enables patients to continue receiving care for their chronic conditions while reducing the risk of exposure, slowing the spread of the virus, and reducing unnecessary travel. This pandemic has proven there are means to achieve the same outcome, which is continuity of patient care without disruption.

Previous to this pandemic, telemedicine was approved for rural areas where access to care is challenging. There are several instances patients are unable to keep their provider appointments because of obstacles in our healthcare system such as lack of transportation, conflicting work hours, and provider practice hours. In my opinion, it would be a great change to continue telemedicine as an alternate available option without restrictions. This can potentially close some of our healthcare access gaps.

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