

This week's scenario describes two hospitalized patients who will be discharged with telehealth services. Telehealth was primarily developed to provide primary care to rural and underserved patients using audio and video technology (Gajarawala & Pelkowski, 2021). Since its inception, telehealth services have increased exponentially, especially with the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Its implementation has increased access to care, helped to decrease and eliminate disparities, and has become a standard of practice in many healthcare settings. Analyzing this scenario and evaluating how equity, respect, self-determinism, health literacy, cyclic disadvantage, and healthcare disparities are essential in predicting and anticipating outcomes, especially in marginalized patient populations.

Equality and respect have been longstanding issues of concern in healthcare, especially for specific groups. For example, women and minorities have long suffered from inequality and, subsequently, disrespect throughout history that has permeated their healthcare, often resulting in poor outcomes and abysmal care. To achieve safe, high-quality care, healthcare providers must treat everyone, including those who differ from us in race, belief, gender, sexuality, etc., with respect and compassion. That respect translates into equal patient care, improving outcomes and overall care. Additionally, while healthcare providers' attitudes and treatment of the patient can affect outcomes, the patients themselves must be actively involved in their care. Self-determination is necessary for positive health outcomes, as the patient is primarily responsible for implementing the plan of care daily. Improving health outcomes often requires lifestyle changes such as medication compliance, exercise, smoking or alcohol use cessation, or dietary improvements, which can be challenging. This can be challenging in marginalized patient populations lacking resources or health literacy. Because of this, it is essential that patients remain determined to care for themselves, open to education, and motivated to achieve their highest level of health by taking responsibility for their well-being. Providers must remain cognizant of these barriers and do their due diligence to eliminate and reduce them, when possible, through education and resource allocation. Similarly, cyclic disadvantages and health disparities suffered by marginalized communities are significant barriers to overcome to achieve good health outcomes. Because of issues like systemic racism, certain people of racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds are left behind by the healthcare field. Healthcare providers must consciously address their biases and incorporate social justice into their practice for the benefit of all patients, regardless of their background. Each of these concepts has real-life implications in patient care, and depending on whether or not they are addressed and properly managed, they can have positive or detrimental effects on patient outcomes. Because of this, healthcare providers must work with their patients to recognize, address, and manage these potential areas of disadvantage and disparity to promote positive outcomes across all patient populations.

While both patients entered the hospital for vastly different conditions, they both stand to benefit from telehealth services. One thing they have in common is their reduced access to healthcare, whether because of where they live or their profession. Mr. Kasich lives in a rural area 40 miles from the nearest healthcare provider, and Mr. Lang works as a long-haul truck driver. Because he is on the road frequently, Mr. Lang would benefit from having access to the same healthcare