

## Telemedicolegal Aspects of Telemedicine

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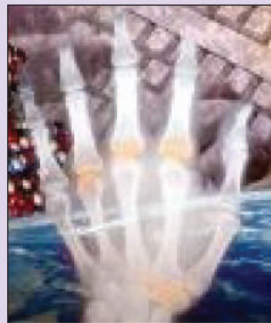
### Introduction:

Today the internet has become a vital link to accessing health information, formal education, and resources essential to social and economic well — being.

It is not surprising that advancing this technology is the primary objective of the medical care delivery field, including both practitioners and researchers and that the development of telemedicine as one part of the health information system is on the cusp of this progression. As the health care system moves rapidly forward enormous technological changes are taking place that will have a significant impact on health care professionals.

In this regard, telemedicine is one of the anticipated changes that is likely to significantly revise the way health care is delivered and documented.

Telemedicine uses telecommunications and information technology to enable or support health care delivery services. These technologies have been used within and across health institutions and between health care professionals for such services as remote evaluation of radiological images and distribution of laboratory results or consultation with clinical experts (1).



Telemedicine is useful in situations in which physical barriers prevent the ready transmission of information between physicians and /or patients other availability of information is the key to appropriate treatment. Telemedicine offers many benefits: better access for patients in rural and under served areas, reduced travel time for health care providers and improved techniques for medical education (2). This rapidly changing technology, results in different modalities of patient treatment as well as changing requirements for patient records keeping, confidentiality, documentation and etc that must be addressed (3).

### Finding:

The most visible advance that people are aware of are telecommunications applications for health care. The wireless telephone, the facsimile machine, teleconferencing capability, the Internet, and local area networks within health care organizations now make it possible for health care professionals to consult, confer, change orders, and update treatment plans without travelling to the site of the patient encounter.

These devices make health care delivery more effective and efficient by reducing the time and effort needed by health care personnel to share information with primary care offices, nursing units, and ancillary services such as pharmacy, radiology, and social work (4).

Telemedicine is a comprehensive system integrating various applications including: clinical healthcare delivery, arrangement of medical information and educational and administrative services. It is described as the use of communication equipment to link healthcare practitioner and patients in different locations and as the technology used by health care providers for reasons including; increased cost efficiency, reduced care, and better communication among providers. The term telemedicine, telehealth and e-health are often used somewhat interchangeably, and yet, may be defined in a number of different ways. In general: 1) these terms refer to the provision of various kinds of health services, ranging from information about health and illness through diagnostic assessment, remote monitoring of patient condition, and robotic interventions; 2) the services in question involve persons who are at some distance from the provider; and 3) services are accomplished using a variety of telecommunications, video and information technologies. While the term telemedicine is ordinarily used to refer to the remote provision of medical care, the broader term telehealth is often used to include patient education, public health continuing education for health professionals, administrative meetings, and psychiatric discharge planning. E-health is frequently used to refer to commercial applications of the Internet technology that generate revenue, either by selling or advertising health — related goods and services, or by obtaining and selling information about internet users .

These include text, voice, or graphic information. It embraces everything from the very basic technology which is in common use today like telephone consultations and facsimile transmissions between physicians and other health care providers, to very sophisticated video conferencing techniques for diagnostic activities or remote supervision of patient care delivery ( 5-6). The emancipation of the consumer — patient has led to a whole range of activities around patient information systems; systems that provide individual patients with information on their condition, but also- possibly — with access to their own medical records .E-mail