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COVID-19 Brings Telehealth Services to Normal Health Care

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Whether suffering from COVID-19, an ongoing condition or a sudden stomach bug, we rely on our health care providers to treat us even during a pandemic.

Telehealth has been on the rise across the United States in the past decade. But with the current COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth has become more visible and accepted among patients. With the rise of this modern approach to medicine and the advanced training that allows pharmacists to contribute directly to patient care, Cedarville University's School of Pharmacy has placed 11 of its faculty members in telehealth remote clinical care locations throughout Dayton, the Miami Valley and Columbus.

Telehealth services involve video, and in some cases just audio, to provide health care over a platform that is Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant.

"The increase of telehealth during the pandemic has been phenomenal," said Dr. Justin Cole, chair of pharmacy practice, associate professor of pharmacy practice and director of the Center for Pharmacy Innovation. He is working with the pediatric behavioral health team at Rocking Horse Community Health Center in Springfield, Ohio.

"From a health care perspective, many payors have loosened restrictions around telehealth encounters, paving the way for use in more cases," he continued. "From a patient perspective, this expansion of telehealth offers a level of accessibility to health care services never before seen in history."

Cole's Cedarville colleague Dr. Nathanael Smith, assistant professor of pharmacy practice, can see great value to patients through the new way of treating patients.

"I provide effective, timely care for selecting proper medication doses, adjusting doses, switching to alternative therapy and other services while staying connected to the entire health care team involved," said Smith, who is providing medicine review and consultation for Grandview Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio.

"I am able to effectively perform these services, all while protecting myself and others by preventing the spread of COVID-19."

Other positives of telehealth include patient convenience and limited physical interaction during this time of social distancing.

Dr. Andrew Straw, assistant professor of pharmacy practice, is providing adult family medicine services at Rocking Horse Community Health Center in Springfield, Ohio. He noted that the no-

show rate for patients not making appointments has greatly decreased with telehealth. The no-show rate before the growth of telehealth was about 30%, and now it is less than 10%.

“The need for health care doesn't stop because of COVID-19. If anything, our patients need us more right now, especially in my area of behavioral health,” said Cole. “The Lord has blessed me with training as a health care provider. I want to steward this training well, regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in. Telehealth technology allows me to do just that.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,380 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including its [Doctor of Pharmacy](#) program, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and high student engagement ranking. For more information about Cedarville University, visit www.cedarville.edu.