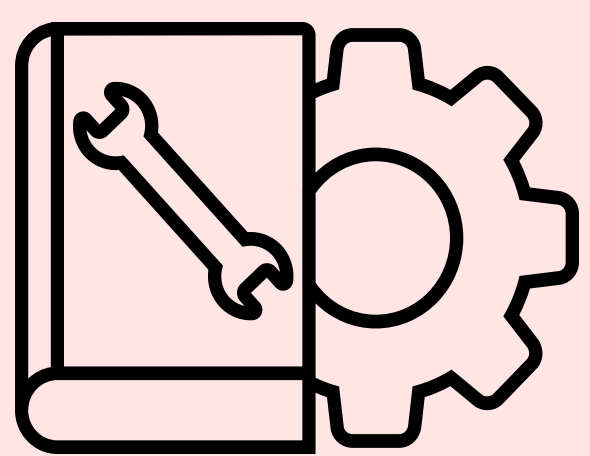# Key Considerations:
Telehealth Readiness

This document provides a brief overview of key considerations for organizations to ensure they are well prepared for success with their telehealth efforts. Whether you're just getting started, or dove into telehealth head first to quickly respond to COVID-19, taking time to plan your long-term approach is an important step. Assessing your organization's readiness from multiple perspectives, including administrative, clinical and technological can help you identify both challenges and opportunities, and proactively address any issues, facilitating a smooth process for implementation and growth. **Have questions?** Reach out to the Northeast Telehealth Resource Center (NETRC) for free technical assistance and resources - Contact Us!

Research & Learn

✓ You have a strong base knowledge of telehealth

- Develop your understanding of telehealth: definitions, modalities, specific use cases and outcomes, various equipment and software platforms, and what resources are available.

Here are a few great places to start:
- Telehealth 101 (Northeast Telehealth Resource Center)
- Telehealth Resource Library (Northeast Telehealth Resource Center)
- Telehealth Bootcamp (Bi-State Primary Care Association)
- Telehealth Resource Guide (Bi-State Primary Care Association)

Identify Unmet Healthcare Needs

✓ You understand the needs of your community and how telehealth can help address them

- Determine patient/client and provider needs for certain services. For example, clients may have difficulty obtaining services due to provider shortages, distance and/or transportation challenges.
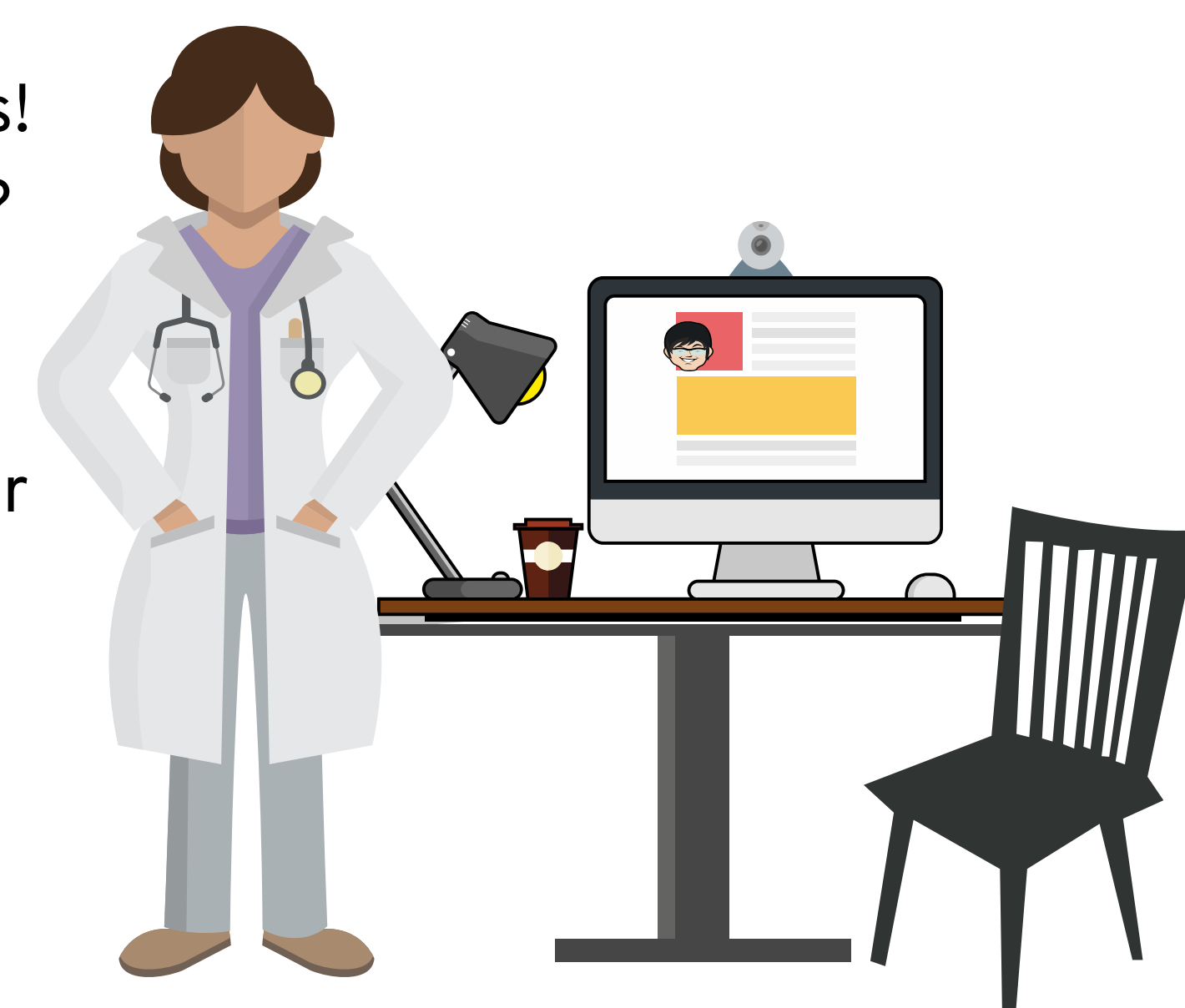- Determine the current ability and capacity to provide services.

Check out the Maryland Health Care Commission's Telehealth Readiness Assessment Tool (page 3) or the California Telehealth Resource Center Telehealth Program Developer Kit (page 6) for a needs assessment checklist.

Assess Technology Capabilities

✓ You've confirmed technology capacity and needs for short and long-term telehealth efforts

- Carefully review your current network to determine if there are any issues with bandwidth, security, etc. This will help you assess what improvements need to be made in order to successfully support the type of services you want to provide.
- Identify and procure equipment and/or software necessary to successfully deliver identified services via telehealth.
- Identify technology skills and challenges among your patients! For example, are they comfortable with using the technology? Do they have a device and adequate connectivity?
  - Look here for patient resources in VT: Public Service Dept.
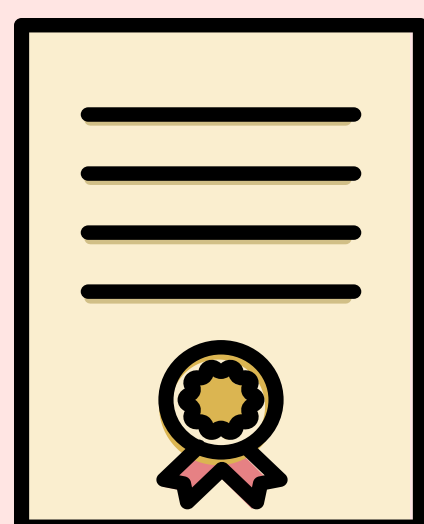 - And check out TelehealthForSeniors.org to find resources for older adults.

The National Telehealth Technology Assessment Center (TTAC) is an excellent resource to help with technology assessment and selection!

Financial & Reimbursement

✓ You've developed a business plan that includes short and long-term expenses and revenues

- Consider initial start-up costs, long-term financial sustainability, traditional reimbursement structures, and innovative payment models for telehealth services.
- Check out the Center for Connected Health Policy (CCHP) website for federal and state specific reimbursement policies.
- Click here for payer information specific to Vermont. (Bi-State Primary Care Association)

Legal & Regulatory Requirements

✓ Your team understands federal and state legal and regulatory requirements specific to telehealth
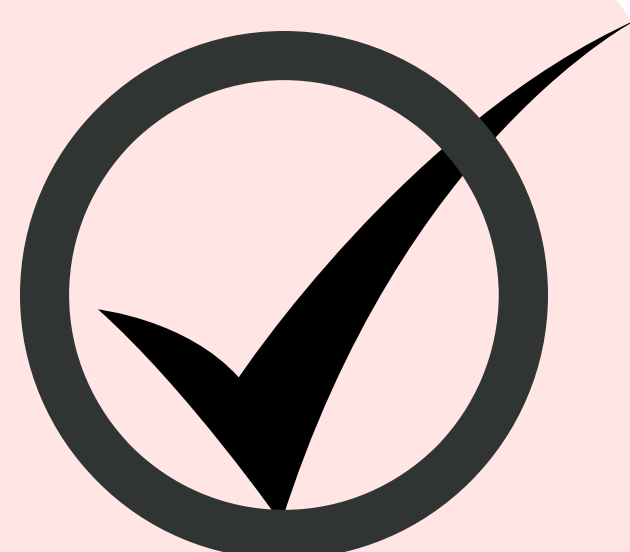
- Identify any legal, legislative or regulatory constraints that your organization would need to comply with when developing your telehealth program.
  - This includes confirming mandatory licensing and/or credentialing, privacy/security and other requirements for providers to practice. For more information, click here.

Staff Training & Engagement

✓ Your team is competent in providing services via telehealth

- Assess provider knowledge, awareness, and skills pertaining to telehealth within your organization.
- Identify high quality training resources and ensure it is implemented among all staff involved in telehealth services.
  - Check out for FREE: Telehealth Coordinator Training (California TRC and Northeast TRC)
  - There are many additional telehealth training resources available, including free offerings and fee-based programs which offer continuing education credits or certificates.

Implement & Evaluate

✓ You've launched telehealth and are measuring success

- If your readiness assessment indicates you are prepared to move forward, it's time to implement your telehealth program. See: Quick Start Guide to Telehealth (Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center); Telehealth Essentials (Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center)
- Evaluate your program - identify SMART* goals that help you measure success (e.g. increased access, decreased no-shows, improved clinical outcomes, etc.) (*Univ. of California)
- If your assessment indicates you're not quite ready, identify the barriers and brainstorm strategies toward a solution. And don't hesitate to tap into regional resources for help!

Dive Deeper

There are many helpful resources available to assist with the day-to-day logistics of telehealth. While not an exhaustive list, the following provide a wealth of practical information and resources around telehealth implementation, including: model programs, workflows, protocols, billing procedures, web-side manner, tech trouble-shooting, patient education, and more.

- **Telehealth.HHS -** U.S. Health and Human Services

- **National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers**

- **Telehealth Resources for COVID-19 Toolkit** Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center

- **AMA Telehealth Playbook -** American Medical Association

Join the NETRC and VPQHC for virtual Telehealth Office Hours!
First Wednesday of the Month 12:00pm-1:00pm
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/206326018